

SARADA

1982

SRI RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAMA

SRINAGAR, KASHMIR

"Give up Jealousy and conceit. Learn to work unitedly for others. This is the great need of our country".

—*S. Vivekananda.*



With Compliments from :-

M/s CHAM/ ... :O.

A-3

पुरुष एवेदं सर्वं यद भूतं यच्च भव्यम् ।

—ऋग्वेद

[All this comes from the Great Lord—what is born and what is yet to be born]

SARADA



SOUVENIR

OF

SRI RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAMA

SHIVALAYA, KARAN NAGAR

SRINAGAR, (KASHMIR), 190010.

December 7, 1982

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Secretary
SRI RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAMA,
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Thanks

We take this opportunity to thank all those friends who have helped us in various ways in the publication of the Souvenir 'Sarada', - the advertisers, the printers and the contributors of various articles :

1. The Editor, Prabuddha Bharta for allowing us to reproduce here :

a) An article by Srimat Swami Vireswarananda Ji Maharaj, President Ramakrishna Math and Mission, entitled, "A temple of Sri Ramakrishna and its significance".

b) An article "pilgrimage to Sri Amarnath" by Mrs. Jean Pohli.

2. Srimat Swami Bhuteshananda Ji Maharaj, Vice - President, Ramakrishna Math and Mission for his tape recorded talk on Holy Mother delivered at Sri Ramakrishna Ashram, Srinagar in the year 1977.

3. Srimat Swami Ranganathananda Ji Maharaj, President, Ramakrishna Math, Hyderabad, for his permission to publish an article 'The message of Swami Vivekananda' from the book Enternal Values for a changing society.

4. Srimat Swami Gaurishawaranda Ji Maharaj for his article 'Sri Sri Maa'.

5. Srimat Swami Lakshman Jee, a leading exponent of Kashmiri Shaivism, for his article, "Trika - the cream of Kashmir Shaivism".

6. Srimat Swami Jitaatmananda Ji of Ramakrishna Math, Hyderabad for his article 'Mother worship, Modern Times and Sri Ramakrishna'.

7. Sri Janki Nath Kaul 'Kamal' for his article on 'Hymn to Gauri'.

8. Sri K. L. Swaroop, Vice President, Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Srinagar for his article on 'Bhairava Stotra'.

9. Prof. S. L. Sadhu for his article 'Kalhana and Rajtarrangni'.

10. Dr. Samvit Kaul, Deptt. of Anthropology, Punjab University, for his article "Ethnic Elements in Ancient Kashmir".

11. Shri Moti Lal Saaqi, Sahitya Academy Award Winner, in Kashmiri literature, for his article on "Soofi poetry in Kashmir".

12. Prof. B. N. Parimoo for his article on 'Lalladed'.

13. Srimat Swami Brameshananda Ji, Physician specialist working at Sri Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service Varanasi, for his article on 'Religion - Today and Tommorrow'

14. Prof. Z. L. Jalla, Deptt. of History, Kashmir University, for his article 'Lalla a study in Historical perspective'.

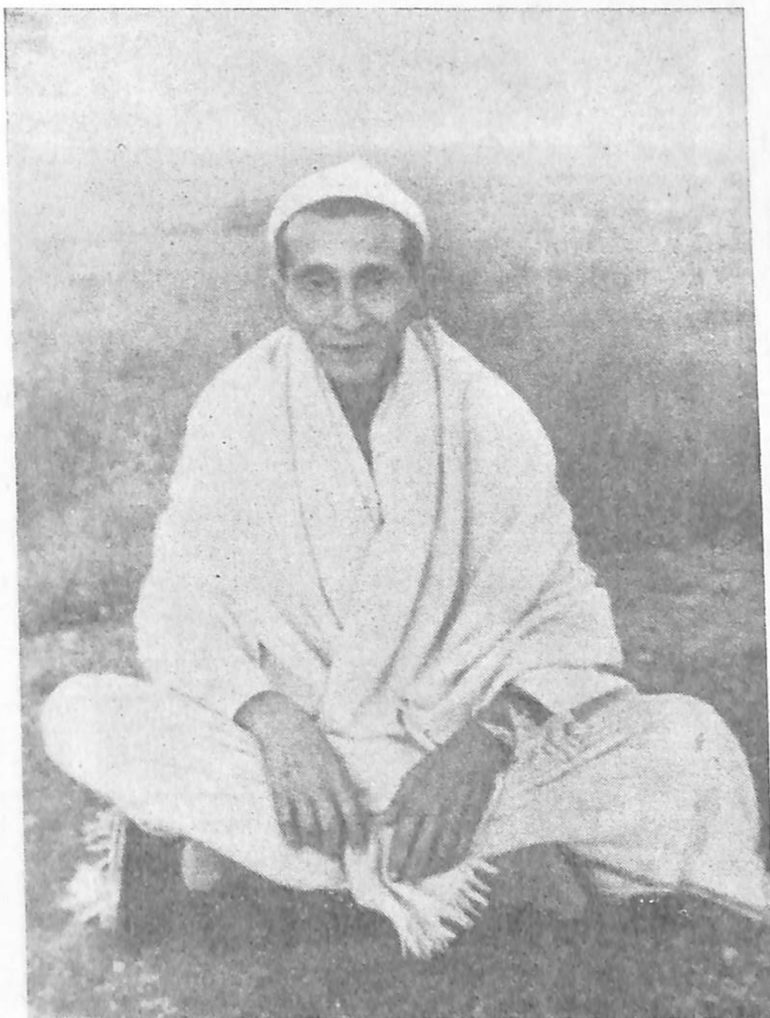
15. Shri Omkar Nath Sadhu, Artist for cover design of the 'Sarada'.

16. Dr. K. N. Koul of Bombay for making blocks of Photographs available for this Souvenir.

B. N. KAUL
SECRETARY



Sri Ramkrishna Dev



Swami Vireswarananda

Message

PRESIDENT,
RAMAKRISHNA MATH & MISSION,
BELUR MATH, HOWRAH,
WEST BENGAL.

I am glad to know that you propose to construct a two storeyed building to house the various departments of the Ashrama.

I wish your endeavour all success.

With love and blessing to all of you,

Swami Vireswarananda.

VICE-PRESIDENT,
RAMAKRISHNA MATH & MISSION,
RAMAKRISHNA YOGODYAN MATH,
7 YOGODYAN LANE,
KANKURGACHHI,
CALCUTTA 700 054.

I am glad to know that Sri Ramakrishana Ashrama, Srinagar, is going to bring out a Souvenir in connection with the construction of some buildings in the Ashrama compound to accommodate their Library, Auditorium, Shrine Hall and Dispensary at a cost of Rs. 4 lakhs.

Srinagar is one of the holiest places in India, where many important pilgrim centres are situated. Moreover, it is particularly dear to the devotees of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda because of its association with the sacred momory of Swami Vivekananda, who expressed his keen desire to establish a branch centre of the Ramakrishna Mission there. The Ramakrishna Ashrama at Karannagar has been established by the devotees with the idea that it will be the centre for the dissemination of ideals of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda and conduct its various activities for the service of the people of the valley.

Besides the scenic beauty and salubrious climate of the area, Srinagar is the gate-way to the holy cave of Sri Amarnathji, where devoted pilgrims flock every year from all parts of India. Moreover, tourists from abroad by thousands are attracted every year by the beauty and the granduer of the valley.

I pray to Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda that Ramakrishna Ashrama, Srinagar, may help the people of the region grow morally, intelectually and spiritually.

Swami Bhuteshananda

VICE-PRESIDENT
RAMAKRISHNA MATH & MISSION,
RAMRKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA,
SWAMI VISHUDDHANANDA ROAD,
MORABADI,
CAMP RANCHI.

I am very happy to know that the Ramakrishna Ashrama at Shivalaya is planning to expand further. An Ashrama, Swamiji had once hoped to establish in Kashmir to propagate the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna—in this once well-known seat of learning and religion-is taking a distinct shape.

I pray to him and Sri Ramakrishna to shower their blessings on the efforts of the devotees of the Ashrama.

Swami Gambhirananda

VICE-PRESIDENT,
RAMAKRISHNA MATH,
BELUR MATH, DT HOWRAH,
WEST BENGAL.

I am glad to know that you are going to publish a Souvenir to raise Funds for the development of the present Ashrama at Srinagar.

I send my best wishes for your every effort in this direction and pray for every success of the Project undertaken

May Sri Guru Maharaj guide and bless you all is my earnest prayer.

Swami Nirvananada.

SRI SRI MATRI MANDIR,
JOYRAMBATI,
WEST BENGAL.

"............I have read your appeal also and hope through the grace of Thakur and Mother money will be available easily,............with love and best wishes and Holy Mother's blessings to all of you.

Swami Gauriswarananda

GENERAL SECRETARY,
RAMAKRISHNA MISSION,
BELUR MATH,
WEST BEGAL.

We are glad to know that you are undertaking construction of a new building containing Auditorium, Library, Dispensary etc. We hope by the grace of Sri Ramakrishna you will succeed in your efforts.

Swami Vandanananda

GENERAL SECRETARY,
SRI SARADA MATH,
DAKSHINESWAR,
CALCUTTA, 700076.

We are really happy to know that you are going to construct a building for your different kinds of activities. May Mother bless you all and may you be successful in your project is our sincere prayer. All the Sannyasinis of Sarada Math also join me in sending all good wishes.

Trust this will find all well with you. The Message of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Ji is spreading all over the world. Blessed are they who can do something to serve this Great Cause.

Pravrajika Muktiprana

ASSISSTANT GENERAL SECRETARY,
RAMAKRISHNA MISSION,
BELUR MATH, DT. HOWRAH
WEST BENGAL.

I am happy to know about the developments of Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama in Srinagar. Swamiji wished Kashmir to have Ramakrishna centre. A vigorous centre propagating the universal Gospel of Truth, Understanding, Fellowship, Harmony and Unity of man as preached by Sri Ramakrishna is overdue. Your efforts are therefore, laudable.

By the grace of the Master, I am confident that your present efforts to raise funds will receive warm response. I wish you every success.

Swami Atmasathanand

RAMAKRISHNA MATH,
RAMAKRISHNA MATH MARG,
DOMALGUDA,
HYDERABAD-500025

I am glad to know that your Ashrama has plans to construct a building to house Dispensary, Library and Books Sales centre and an Auditorium at a cost of about Rs. 4 lakhs and that you propose to bring out a Souvenir to raise the funds needed for the project.

Your Ashrama has done good work and I am sure the public will respond generously with donations to accomplish the project. The project and the Souvenir, and the fund collection efforts, have my best wishes.

Swami Ranganathananda

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH,
POST BOX NO: 635,
MYLAPORE, MADRAS, 600004.

I am glad to know that Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Sivalaya, Srinagar is going to build a two storeyed building to house their Dispensary, Library-cum Reading room, Sales section and Auditorium. The spread of the message of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda all over the country is a prime need of our times, and a region like Kashmir where there is no official centre of Shri Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, Ashrama of the type you are conducting can alone fulfil this need. The blessings of the Great Master are with you and I pray to him that your endeavour may meet with all success.

Swami Tapasyananda.

SECRETARY
RAMAKRISHNA MISSION
VIVEKANANDA ASHRAMA
RAIPUR (M. P.)

Glad to learn that Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Srinagar plans to construct a Dispensary, Library-cum-Reading Room, Sales Section and an Auditorium adjacent to its present premises. I also learn that it is bringing out a Souvenir to make a greater number of people know about its activities so as to draw their sympathy and liberal support for its noble cause.

The world today is fraught with people affected by religious intolerance and narrow sectarian ideas. So any institution or organisation that stands for universal love and one humanity does a real service to the society at large. It is here that Ashrama is doing a very useful service to the pople of that area by trying to disseminate the universal ideas and ideals as lived and preached by Śri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. I am sure the Ashr ma will find support from all communities and religious groups in fulfilling its noble objectives.

I wish the Souvenir and the endeavours of the Ashrama all success.

Swami Atmananda

PRESIDENT
ADVAITA ASHRAMA
5-DEHI ENTALLY ROAD
CALCUTTA 700014.

We are glad to learn that you are going to construct a Library-cum-Reading Room, a dispensary and an Auditorium, adjoining the present Ashrama at Srinagar, at a cost of about Rs. 4 to 5 lakhs. In order to rise the necessary funds for the proposed construction, you are bringing out a souvenir. We wish you all success in your earnest endeavours.

May Sri Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother, and the Swamiji bless you all devotees of Srinagar, and enable you to rise the necessary funds and complete the construction work as early as possible.

With our love and best wishes to the devotees of Ashrama there.

Swami Ananyananda.

INTRODUCTION

An organization dedicated to the ideals of Vedanta as propounded by Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda got its birth in Srinagar on the day when Swamiji first visited Kashmir in 1897 and in a letter to Swami Brahmananda wrote :

"........ there is no place so beautiful as this; and the people also are fair and good-looking," (complete works, Vol.VIII). Swami Ji had a great desire of establishing a centre of Ramakrishna Math and Mission over here. But due to certain unknown reasons the idea could not get a practical shape at that time. So the spark remained there for a pretty long time. It smouldered slowly inside the hearts of ardent devotees and finally leapt out as a big flame when in 1956 the present Ashrama came into existence though at that time under the name of 'Sri Ramakrishna Vivekananda. Sevasadan'. It was through the efforts of a group of devotees that a small hall, a part of present shrine hall, was constructed and Sri Ramakrishna's likeness installed. The daily activity at that time was limited to daily evening 'Arati' and Bhajan programmes. Regular Sunday meetings were held in which Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna was read. At times men of deep study and scholistic taste would join the devotees and give discourses. This way of working continued for some years.

Meanwhile Srimat Swami Ramananda Sarswati started taking keen interest in the functioning of this centre. It was his moving spirit behind this Ashrama that this organisation came to be known as 'Sri-Ramakrishna Ashrama.' Swami Ramananda's sterling qualities, devotion, humility and service at Ashrama were remarkable and created a right type of atmosphere and inspiration for others to live the ideals of the Ashrama in the true spirit. The famous dictum "Atmano Mokshartham Jagadhitya cha" - for self emanicipation and for the welfare of the world, is the ideal to which the Ashrama is dedicated.

In the year 1966, Swami Vireswarananda and Swami Abhayananda of Ramakrishna Math & Mission visited the Ashrama. Their blessings and words of strength gave a new direction to the working of the A hrama. A new two - storeyed building with a shrine hall, library & two guest rooms came into existence. Since then Srimat Swami Bhuteshwananda, Swami Ranganathanada, Swami Gaurishwarananda, Swami Atmananda and many other revered and enlightened personalities visited the Ashrama from time time and encouraged the devotees here in Kashmir. The activities of the Ashrama since then have centered around i) Worship, ii) Library & Reading Room facilities, iii) Dispensary facilities, iv) Involvement of youth v) Cultural and spiritual camps, etc. etc.

The activities of the Ashrama slowly spread and more and more devotees got attracted towards the centre. This necessiated a bigger complex. As a result, with the generous cooperation of Samaj Sudhar Samiti, Ashrama started constructing a library, a dispensary, an auditorium and a Shrine hall just adjacant to the present Ashrama premises, at Shivalaya, Chota Bazar, Srinagar. The whole project is estimated to cost more than Rupees six lacs. Efforts are being made to raise funds. It is with this purpose that this first issue of "Sarada" - a Souevnir has been issued. The Ashrama feels indebted to those who took this opportunity of joining the list of advertisers in this Souvenir. We appeal to the general public to donate generously to the building fund of the Ashrama so that the dream becomes a reality.

We also thank the authors of various articles that have been included in this issue. We express our thanks to Sh. O. N. Sadhu artist for cover design.

Srinagar,
Dec. 7, 1882.

CONVENER

A Temple of Sri Ramakrishna and its Significance

—*Swami Vireswarananda*

[We bring out for our readers below the Benedictory Address delivered by Revered Swami Vireswaranandaji, the President of the Ramakrishna Mission and Ramakrishna Math, at the dedication celebration of the newly-built Temple of Sri Ramakrishna at Vivekananda Ashram, Raipur, on February 3, 1976. The address explains in clear phrases and in brief compass the significance of a temple dedicated to Sri Ramakrishna, and incidentally deals with two important aspects of Sri Ramakrishna's life and teachings : namely, the religious harmony and the unity of mankind ... ... Ed.]

SIX years back I had the pleasure of laying the foundation stone of this temple. At that time it was a mere idea — a dream, you could say, but today it is an accomplished fact. Yesterday the temple, which was constructed and finished, was consecrated and the image of Sri Ramakrishna was also installed. And now he is seated there, blessing everyone, 'for the good of many, for the happiness of many' —bahu-jana-hitaya bahu-jana-sukhaya.

These temples seem to be a common feature in every civilization. Perhaps they come into existence as the result of the psychological need in man. Man wants to grasp God, who is infinite, in some concrete form and he wants some place where he can feel His presence. These are the ideas at the back of shrines in our families and of all the places of public worship, like temples, churches and mosques. These have all come up to meet some psychological necessity or need of man. 'There are two types of temples', says Bhagvan Sri Krishna to Uddhava in the Srimat Bhagavatam 'one dedicated to deities (like Siva, Durga, Kali and others) and the other, dedicated to incarnations and saints.' Now this temple of Sri Ramakrishna comes under the second category—of those dedicated to incarnations and saints.

Perhaps there may be some hesitation in the minds of some persons, to accept Sri Ramakrishna as an avatara. Then I shall request to take him as a great saint of modern times. Sri Krishna further says to Uddhava, 'Those who worship the saints with a desire will attain that desire and those who worship them without any desire will attain salvation.' So here is a place for you all to worship Sri Ramakrishna, the great modern sage if not avatara, and you are sure to get whatever you desire. All your desires will be fulfilled. And if you pray without desires you are

sure to attain salvation. So this is a place where anyone can come and realize the four purusarthas (values of life) - dharma, artha, kama and moksa (righteousnesss, wealth, enjoyment, and emancipation). If anyone worships with desires, he will get dharma, artha and kama: and if he worships without desires he will attain moksa.

But Sri Ramakrishna was not merely a saint, he was something unique, a saint of a unique type. He had realised in his life through sadhanas (spiritual discpline), as prescribed by the various religions, that all religions ultimately lead to the same truth. So he had come to know through his own realizations that all religions were true and that they ultimately led to the same goal. That made him declare, 'Jato mat tato path'—'As many faiths, so many paths to God realization).' Thus Sri Ramakrishna is the symbol of religious unity. He is the symbol of unity of mankind. He had realized that the selfsame Atman was in every human being, irrespective of the race or religion or nationality to which he belonged. The atman was there behind the apparent man. It was there in every one—from the brahmana to the candala (belonging to the lowest)—in the high and the low, in the learned and the ignorant, in the rich and the poor. Sri Ramakrishna realised that all the differences that we see—difference in the colour of skin, differences in caste, difference in status—are all created by our ignorance: but in reality humanity is one. He realized the truth contained in the Hindi couplet, 'Rama who was Dasaratha's son is the same Rama who is immanent in all,' Thus Sri Ramakrishna made no difference between man and man; and so I say that this temple is open for worship to everyone, to whatever nationality he or she may belong, to whatever race or country, to whatever caste—brahmana or Ksatriya or candala. Be they rich or poor, learned or ignorant, this temple is open to all; even to the people professing other religions. Because they will find that Sri Ramakrishna is their very own, as he had realized the ultimate Reality by taking recourse to each of these religions. So this temple, I should say, is a universal temple where people are to be united as one human community. And particulalry for our country this ideal of unity is very much needed today when we are pass'ng through critical times. Swami Vivekananda used to say. 'India belongs to Sri Ramakaishna, and Sri Ramakrisha is India,'. So you will all be united under the flag of Sri Ramakrishna.

I pray to him that he may bless you all to realize these great ideals so that these twin forms of unity of religion and unity of mankind - may spread all over the country, and particularly in Madhya Pradesh, 'for one's own salvation and for the good of all'-atmano moksartham jagaddhitaya ca.'

Om : Peace, Peace, Peace :

By Courtesy "Prabudha Bharata"

●●●

HOLY MOTHER

—*Swami Bhuteshanandaji*

(Talk given by Srimat Swami Bhuteshananda Ji Maharaj, Vice President Sri Ramakrishna Mission and Sri Ramakrishna Math, in July, 1978 in the Ashrama Premises at Srinagar.)

IT is a happy coincidence that this evening I am to speak on the Holy Mother who is according to us another representation of Khirbhawani. About Holy Mother it is very difficult to speak in a public meeting. As a matter of fact when we were young people in the order we never spoke publicly about the Holy Mother nor was even her picture shown to outside world except to those who were very close devotees. We wanted to keep the Mother hidden within our narrow hearts. We wanted to keep her away from public gaze, thinking that public would not understand her and she would not like to come in lime-light. As we knew her she was extremely shy. Even when appearing before her devotees, she used to conceal herself within the folds of a thick sheet of cloth. And the devotees could hardly view anything except a portion of the feet. That was how the mother behaved in the midst of even her devotees. Therefore, naturally we felt great hesitation in making her expose to the public. But Sri Ramakrishna viewed it otherwise. As I told you Sri Ramakrishna himself kept her hidden in the beginning so much so that Mother would not come out of the house, a prison house as it was called, then, The concert building—a small structure. She remained prisoned in that small room for the whole day and would come out only very early in the morning when it was all dark and no body was there near about. She would go out to the Ganga, have a bath and sit for meditation for long hours and then engage herself in serving Sri Ramakrishna by preparing mince etc. and serving the devotees also who used to come and stay with the Master. However great her longing might have been to enjoy the the spiritual companionship of the master and the disciples she could not do it physically when the music etc. would go on just at a stone's throw, not even a stone's throw—the other side of the road, a small garden path, where Master used to have Kirtan and other things with the devotees. She could not have a sight except through a small hole in the partition, mat partition, that was around that concert room. Through that hole she would just see with her eyes fixed to the fore. Sri Ramakrishna knew it and sometimes used to make a fun with it. One day he said, "O Ramlal, the hole is becoming bigger, you

see." The little hole was there and in order to have a better view, perhaps, mother then made it a little bigger......

Mother was very shy and Sri Ramakrishna also in the beginning did not advise her otherwise. Even the devotees would not meet the mother except a fortunate few like Latu and very rarely a few others. When any body wanted to communicate to her something he would just talk from outside and if mother was to give him a reply, she would reply through somebody, an intermediary, not directly. That was the shyness of the Mother. Once the Manager of the temple told somebody, "We hear that the wife of Sri Ramakrishna stays here in the concert room, but we have never seen her. We have never seen her though constantly we are staying in the same place." They had no occasion to see her. How could they. Because she did not ever appear outside. As I told you, very early in the morning when it was absolutely dark she would come out, have a bath and then get inside and remain there for the whole day. Later on she was permitted to carry food for the master at noon—the noon meal, and the night meal. That was the only opportunity that she used to have for meeting the master, for a few minutes. Otherwise there was no occassion. What kind of training it was that the master was giving her? As I told you, while discussing about Sri Ramakrishna, that the mother was the first disciple that Sri Ramakrishna had. She was the first disciple whom he began to teach not only things spiritual but even how to behave in the world with other people. Even wordly wisdom he used to teach her. As for instance how the household is to be managed, how to behave with people, how to behave while making journey. "While going by boat you will board at the last after seeing whether everything has been put there and you come out last after seeing that everything has been taken from there," Master would say to mother. Likewise he would teach her how the different types of people have to be treated.

It is said that the Master would tell her how an oil lamp is to be trimmed so that wick of the lamp is made such that there is not much consumption of oil. All such things he used to teach her. From wordly wisdom to the highest spiritual knowledge. Sri Ramakrishna taught her what kinds of mantras are necessary for bringing one down from the state of ecstasy. So, that way she became familiar with different types of spiritual ecstacies. Sri Ramakrishna also taught her how she should bring him down when he would be in a state of ecstasy. How to behave with boy disciples, how to treate them and all such dictums. What was the idea behind it? Was it simply that he felt it his duty as a husband to educate the wife.? No, Sri Ramakrishna did not do anything which did not have a larger meaning, which was meant not only for an individual but which was to contribute to the ultimate good of the world also. That has been the decision of the great students of his life who have discovered that every act of Sri Ramakrishna was for the



Sri Sarada Devi

good of mankind. Even the ordinary things that he did had a deeper meaning than what was there on the surface. "Can you say why I married ?" That was the question and that too before this boy disciple. Naturally nobody could say definitely why it was so. Then he said various things, "Why did I marry ?" Sometimes he said, "You see one has to go through all the samaskaras. Marriage is supposed to be one of the Samaskars." Then another time he mentioned just humorously, "If I had not married who would give me this time the food that shook my stomach." He was not having a good stomach. So food had to be prepared with utmost care and only the mother knew how to do it. So he said,"If I had not marrried then who would prepare this kind of food for me." The interpretter of the biography of Sri Ramakrishna—that is the author of "Sri Ramakrishna—The Great Master"—has discussed this point. He said, "To our understanding it means that Sri Ramakrishna wanted to hold before the world an example how married life is to be lived with the ideal of just approaching towards God-realization. It had to be taught not only through certain instructions but an illustration was needed and that the illustration was his own life with the Holy Mother. Now that was how the relation between the Master and the Holy Mother has got to be understood from the very beginning. She was a student who was taught everything by the Master ... ... Then gradually, though the Holy Mother was extremely shy Sri Ramakrishna did not in the beginning make any effort to just break that spell of shyness on her part, yet it was he again who sent some of the disciples to her on various times. The disciples sometimes wanted to ask a question, he would direct them to the Holy Mother, 'You ask her'. That was in the beginning unusual, but gradually this method was followed by the master more systematically. Why? What was the idea? The idea was, as Sri Ramakrishna mentioned, "You do not know she is the Goddess of learning. She has come to give wisdom, knowledge to the world. Now her role has to be played and she should get over that shyness and must be prepared for the role she is destined to play." Very often he used to say, "She is purity incarnated. Incarnation of purity." Various ways he mentions about the purity of mother. "If she was not as pure as that who knows whether I could have remained pure throughout." That is the highest compliment that perhaps anybody can give to a dutiful wife like Maa Sarada Devi, the Holy Mother.

In this way the Mother was being prepared. Once somebody had given Rs. 5 to Sri Ramakrishna. Sri Ramakrishna could not take the money, so he told Holy Mother, "Well, will you keep that money ? I cannot keep it." Then Mother said, "How can that be ? If I keep, that money will be spent for your service only. So it is as good as your accepting it. How can I accept. You are so much respected because of your extreme renunciation. My acceptance of that money will mean making

compromise with the vow of renunciation". Sri Ramakrishna appreciated the expression. Admired her because of it. She was very practical in her judgement. One day Sri Ramakrishna was going to a place where there was a celebration and a huge gathering. In the name of God there would be singing dancing and rejoicing. Sri Ramakrishna was very much attracted to that and some boats were going. Sri Ramakrishna and devotees were taken by boat. Somebody suggested, "Will not Holy Mother accompany" Then Sri Ramakrishna replied, "You ask her." Then somebody went and asked. Mother said, 'No'. Later on somebody asked Mother, "Why did you say, No? Why did you miss such a golden opportunity of seeing Sri Ramakrishna in ecstasy in the midst of huge gathering of devotees. It was a grand sight. Why did you not go?" Mother said, "You see when Thakur asked me that, that means he left to me the decision. If it was his intention, he would have said, "Certainly she would come'! But instead of that he wanted that I might be asked. I understand that it was not his intention. So I said, No". Then Sri Ramakrishna commented after hearing this, "You see, How wise she is?. If she had gone there—If she would have seen me in ecstasy, she would have been troubled.

So she did very wise in her part not to have gone there." This was how Thakur used to test mother at every step. At one occasion the Mother went to Sri Ramakrishna. Sri Ramakrishna said, "Have you come to drag me to the world." Mother said, "why?, why should I do that? I have come to serve you and help you progress in your path by serving you, by looking after your needs. Why should I drag you to the world." Sri Ramakrishna became very happy. He became satisfied that the destiny of the Holy Mother will be rightly fulfilled as it is the will of the Divine Mother. Gradually when Sri Ramakrishna was having more and more devotees who were earnest seekers of God and Mother was gradually unfolding her spiritual nature and just dminishing was that shyness also. Sri Ramakrishna wanted her to be more actively engaged in this regeneration of the world, that was the task for which Sri Ramakrishna had come. So that way he was gradully making Holy Mother progress along that line. As I told you he used to send the earnest devotees to Holy Mother for Holy Mother's advice. One day Sri Ramakrishna, to demonstrate it that Holy Mother was feeding the devotees as a mother naturally is expected to do, Sri Ramakrishna said, "You gave Babu Ram so many chapaties. He ate so much, how can he meditate ? At 19 he must have less food. So don't give so much food to the boy that will ruin his spiritual career. Who will be responsible for his spiritual progress ?" Mother with all politeness and far insight said, ',Thakur. I shall be responsible for that. Don't worry I shall be responsible for that. Moreover, feeding is mother's job. That is my domain and don't interfere in it." Thakur became very happy. Not that he became annoyed, he was very happy. That is exactly what he wanted to see in the Mother. That motherhood unfolding itself to

the highest degree. That was the intention of Sri Ramakrishna and that was the will of the Divine Mother and Sri Ramakrishna gradually became satisfied. Once he said, it was long after, Sri Ramakrishna told Holy Mother, "Don't you see that the people of Calcutta are squirming like worms in dark. will you not help me do something for them." In the beginning Mother used to say, "What can I do? I am mere a woman. What can I do.?" Sri Ramakrishna would not be satisfied with that. "You must help me in this work of regeneration of the people. You must help me. Be my associate in bringing about a change in these people." And gradually she was also coming up to that stage. One thing you will notice that in the Avataras, throughout the history of all the Avataras, in all the Puranas, there is not a single instance where the concept of the Avataras became such actively associated with the work of this regeneration of the people. Nowhere. There are good instances of a very dutiful wife and so forth-But never will you find a concept of inter-relation contributing so much towards the great work of the Avatara It is a unique life. There is no second illustration of that. Nowhere you will find. Throughout the history of the world you will find it unique. The Mother came as an associate of Sri Ramakrishna. That is what he felt to be, that is how she behaved right upto the end. She was the Mother to all the devotees. She was full of affection and wisdom for the well-being of the children. And how free she later on became with the children. On the one said the privacy and shyness and on the other a wonderful weather of love for the children. Mother, prepared to do every kind of service for the children. The disciples felt, before the Mother, as if she was actually their Mother. And the mother used to feel as if the disciples were actually her children. Absolutely no difference in anyone and as their mother she had to bear all sorts of the demands of children. They were always extremely demanding. Some would say "Mother must prepare my food. Then only I shall eat." Mother was ready to do that. Some said, "Mother must feed me with her own hands, then only I shall eat." Mother was ready for that also.

There is an episode that a person in a drunken state was singing ... ... "O merciful mother you rise up and open your cottage door." Swami Saradananda who was ever guarding her remonstrated that man, saying "Get away, don't disturb the mother. Mother had a busy day, and you have come out in the dead of night in this drunken condition and you want mother to appear"! But the Mother was not to be stopped from that. She opened the window and the drunk man had Darshan. Then, of course, he began to sing. "You carefully keep the mother in your heart; the mother! the worthy mother! O, my mind you see alone yourself and none else would see. That is in great privacy" Then he changed that last line ... ... "Let not my friend see you." That is the friend Swami Sardananda. That was the

mother, kind to the drunkard also. Some people are good but some are drunkards and some are with questionable character. Mother, if they come here, our prestige will be lowered", someone said. The Mother replied, "Yes, my boy, you say so. But do you forget that I am a Mother? Suppose, a child is dirty with mud and dust. What will the mother do? Will she throw the child away or clean the child and take her into her arms. So, is it not my duty as a mother to clean them and take them in my arms." Of course, there is no reply to that. So she was the mother to the extent that there was absolutely no difference between a saint and a sinner in her eyes as a Mother. It so happened that there was one Muslim. He was by profession a dacoit, a dacoit by profession would sometimes get into Jail and sometimes come out of it and whenever he was out of it, he would go to see the Mother and the mother would accept him, receive him there, feed him well. Somebody said, "What are you doing". Now once it so happened that as the feeding was arranged, he too was to be fed there. Now it was a Brahmin house and there, at least in West Bengal, the difference between the Hindus and the Muslims was very tight, water—tight compartments. A muslim was not allowed even to climb the steps of the house. So when Amjad, (his name was Amjad), was to be fed, they thought he was to be fed in the courtyard only, not on the Verendah. But the Mother said "No he is to be fed here." One of the household ladies, who was serving Amjad, was just throwing eatables on his plate. Then mother got extremely annoyed. She said "Stop serving. I shall do it myself. Is that a way to serve? Can anybody eat, if you serve like that? She, with all tenderness, began serving, just as a loving mother would serve or feed her son. Then not only that, when Amjad finished meal and left, mother cleaned his plates, which no Hindu lady would do, not in the least a Brahmin lady.

Somebody said, "Mother what are you doing? You are just cleaning the plate of that muslim, that scoundral." Mother said, "Do not say like that. He is my son. And to me he is same as Sarat, that is Swami Sardananda. In my eyes there is no difference between Amjad and Sarat, between the muslim dacoit and Swami Sardananda (who had all along devoted his own life for the service of the mother.)" That was mother, all loving without any distinction whatsoever between the good and the bad, between the saint and the sinner, all were equally her sons. That is how the Mother's behaviour was. If you study closely, you will find uniqueness in everything. I did not mention about the supernatural powers that she might have had. She was capable of hiding these to the extreme so that nobody could have any dream of it. Somebody mentioned, "With difficulty, we can somehow understand Thakur, but never the Holy Mother." Thakur would frequently get into ecstasy (Samadhi), but the mother controlled even that. It was very rare thing for anybody to see mother in ecstasy. She was all along mother and only as a loving mother

to cater to the needs of children.

Once, one of her two companions (who were always with her: Golap-Maa, Jogin-Maa who were her associates—Jaya and Vijay, as sometimes they were called) Golap Maa saw the mother in ecstasy which was a rare thing. Then, after she came down, Golap Maa said,"Mother, you say you don't have ecstasy. Today, I found you." Mother said, "No, no, why do you worry about that. That is not ecstasy. Don't speak about it. Don't make any noise about it. Keep quiet." It is surprising why she did not want to make it public. It is clear that if she was found with such spiritual height, then people could not have accepted her as their mother. In order that they accept her as the affectionate mother she did not make any show of it. Then only could they be elevated, as it is said in the Stotra :-

स्नेहेन बध्नासि मनोऽस्मदीयं, दोषानशेषान् सगुणीकरोषि ।
अहेतुना नो दयसे सदोषान्, स्वाङ्के गृहीत्वा यदिदं विचित्रम् ॥

The Mother by her love, by her affection managed to change the lives of disciples. Not by remonstrating, never by giving even white sermons, but by giving love. It was such a forceful iustrument that nobody could resist that. Every body had to yield to that appeal of love. That was the Mother—स्नेहेन बध्नासि......

She united all the souls by means of her affection and all the vices were automatically changed and transferred into virtues. No body had the heart to offend the mother by any kind of thinking or doing ; whatever the practices he might have had, when he thought of Mother, he at once felt alert. 'The Mother is there, sorry." That was how the reform was effected. Not by remonstration, not by scolding, not by any punishment, or anything. It was simply love that transformed people Mother was that way all love. ●●●

The Message of Swami Vivekananda

Swami Ranganathananda

In speaking on the subject of Swami Vivekanananda we are dealing with the life and thought of a rare type of personality thrown up by the modern renaissance in India. Into his short span of thirty nine years Vivekananda compressed an intensity of personal life and realization and intellectual and social achievements which had a powerful impact on India and the western world, and which have permanently effected the destiny of Indian people and their relationship with the rest of the world.

The earthly career of Swami Vivekananda begins with his birth in his parental home in Calcutta on the 12th January, 1863, and closes with his death on the 4th July 1902 at Belur Math, the headquarters of the Ramakrishna Order, established by him near Calcutta. His life coincided with the most dynamic period of the modern transition in India, which resulted from the contact of the age-old Indian culture and tradition with the youthful culture of the modern West. Out of that ferment arose the modern Indian renaissance which had already proceeded with uncertain steps for more than half a century by the time Vivekananda appeared on the scene, and which found in him its most effective representative and exponent. How he equipped himself to play this role is a fascinating and rewarding study.

The formative influences that went to the making of Swami Vivekananda were fourfold : There was, firsts his mastery of the Sanskrit language and through it, the philosophical and spiritual legacy of India's hoary cultural past; secondly, there was his mastery of the English language and, through it, of the scientific, artistic, and social thought of the modern West; thirdly, his five year's discipleship under Sri Ramakrishna (1836-1886), the most outstanding spiritual teacher of nineteenth-century India in whose extraordinay life and realization Vivekananda found verification of India's age-old spiritual legacy and its close kinship with the cultural legacy of the modern West; and, fourthly, his intimate knowledge of the India of the time gained from his years of journeys, mostly on foot, across the length and breadth of India.

It was during his student days at the Calcutta University that young Narendranath Dutta - that was the premonistic name of Vivekananda-came in touch with Sri Ramakrishna, who was then living in the temple garden of Dakshineswar, four miles north of Calcutta, and who was attracting the attention of some of the foremost leaders of the Indian renaissance movement at the time. Narendranath then was a typical



Swami Vivekananda

representative of the modern youth, vital and vivacious, intolerant of superstition and religious bigotry, but unwearied in this search for truth and for a rational basis for man's quest for higher values.

Sri Ramakrishna, on the other hand, was like a full-blown lotus attracting thirsty bees to suck its honey. During his intense spiritual practices of over twelve years, he had lived in turn the spiritual life of the Hindu, Muslim and Christian seekers of God, and realized the truths imbedded in these world religions and their fundamental unity and harmony. His universal mind and heart embraced every spiritual idea and purpose, and stimulated every spiritual aspiration and struggle. In the words of Mahatma Gandhi in his 'Foreword' to the book 'Life of Sri Ramakrishna'. ... ...

'The story of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa's life is the story of religion in practice His life enables us to see God face to face......In this age of scepticism Ramakrishna presents an example of a bright and living faith which gives solace to thousands of men and women who would otherwise have remained without spiritual light.'

In the words of Romain Rolland in his "The Life of Ramakrishna" (p. 14):

"The man, whose image I here evoke, was the consummation of two thousand years of the spiritual life of three hundred million people. Although he has been dead forty years, his soul animates modern India."

The coming together of the serene Ramakrishna and the dynamic Narendranath in the intimate communion of teacher - student relationship proved to be a great event in the history of modern India Narendranath tested Ramakrishna's spiritual experiences and teachings in the crucible of reasons: and Ramakrishna fully encouraged his young disciple in this process. Inspired by the three thousand year old spiritual literature of the Upanisada and its philosophy known as Vedanta, India has inherited a scientific tradition in the field of religion, with its stress on experiment and experience, on one side, and tolerance and inter-religious fellowship, on the other. Ramakrishna reauthenticated and amplified this Vedantic tradition and made it the basis of a comprehensive spirituality capable of nourishing all aspects of human life and endeavour.

It was this philosophy of Vedanta that Vivekananda took upon himself to preach to the Indian people and to the people of West. But before he entered upon this mission of the life, he decided to see for himself the mind and face of contemporary India, which was to be the laboratory for the verification of his philosophy. He accordingly plunged into the ocean of Indian humanity with only a staff and waterpot as his equipment, receiving the devoted hospitality of its princes and peasants, intellectuals and street sweepers, Hindus, Muslims and Christians. He shed tears seeing the dire poverty and misery of the common people; the heartlessness of the intellec-

tuals and upper classes roused his indignation; and the various forms of social injustice and oppression which had thwarted the free development of man in India pained him in the extreme. His spiritual vision of the divinity of man received a a rude jolt from this intimate contact with contemporary India, where he saw millions of fine specimens of humanity reduced to the position of being, to quote his own words, 'next-door neighbours to brutes'. Towards the end of these wanderings, in 1892, the firm decision took possession of his heart that the Vedantic vision of human dignity should be implemented through practical measures and that he should dedicate himself completely to the service of man, of God in man, everywhere.

This fourfold influence made his personality a synthesis of the finest heritage of East and West. In the words of Jawaharlal Nehru in Discovery of India (p. 400):

"Rooted in the past and full of pride in India's heritage, Vivekananda was yet modern in his approach to life's problems, and was a kind of bridge between the past of India and her present."

It was such a rich personality, so impersonal and universal, that took the universal spiritual message of Vedanda to the West and broadcasted it, first, through the Chicago Parliament of Religions in 1893 and later, through hundreds of lectures and discourses in the United States and the United Kingdom. On his return to India in 1897, he similarly imparted his message of practical Vedanta to his countrymen through scores of stirring lectures and talks in which he showed the way to the modernizing of the age-old Indian tradition, designed to brighten the lives of its millions and to strengthen the nation's age old spiritual heritage as well.

"My ideal, indeed, may be put into a few words and that is to preach unto mankind their divinity and how to make it manifest in every movement of life."

This teaching cuts across all divisions based on political or religious affiliations. Its assimilation by man will make for a character at once 'deep as the ocean and broad as the skies' as he expresses it. He held that spirituality was the core of every religion; dogmatic exclusiveness and intolerance are no part of true religion. The more spiritual a man, the more universal he is. It is only such universal men that can realize the urge of the modern age for a universal society. He held that the modern age stood in urgent need of this spiritual education from religion by which man will learn to achieve inward depth to match his wide-branching interests and activities outside. He worked hard to give this spiritual orientation to the world's religions so that they may be transformed into wholly constructive forces and become capable of redeeming modern man from his keenly felt inner impoverishment in the context of external enrichment.

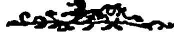


Swami Vivekananda in Kashmir - 1898 A. D.

His speeches and writings are available to us in eight volumes of his 'Complete works'. In the following stirring call to man in every field of activity every where he has, however, conveyed the essence of his message :

"Arise, Awake! and stop not till the goal is reached!"

[*By courtesy from 'Eternal values for A Changing Society*
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SRI SRI MAA

—Swami Gauriswarananda Ji Maharaj.

I first came to Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi in 1915. I was then a school boy of class VIII. I came alongwith Swami Jnananandaji and Gopesh Maharaj (afterwards Swami Saradeshanandaji). In my childish imagination, I thought I would see Mother seated on a throne! But when we entered the compound, I was very much shocked to see the lowly cottage with mud walls, thatched with straw, no cement etc. I was more disappointed to see Mother cleaning the floor with a broom-stick in hand. When I enquired from them about anyone who could help Mother in these small things, they replied, "You begin to come and will know everything." Seeing us Mother said, "My dear boys, wait a bit and let me finish this work and sit down after washing my hands, when you will salute me." So we did. When I touched her feet, Mother enquired about me. They said to her, "He is a student of Badanganj High School." When we returned I again touched her feet and Mother lovingly said, "My dear boy come again." I replied, "Yes Mother I will come". Thence, I began to come to her on every Saturday afternoon and stayed at Jayrambati for Saturday night and Sunday whole day and night and returned to my school on Monday morning. On big holiday I spent the whole vacation at Jayarambati, the birth place of Mother. In those days, like other ladies, Mother also used to put long veil before gents. But because I am dwarf, everybody thinks me to be younger than my age, (Even now, though I am 85, they take me to be about 75 only) therefore Mother never put veil before me. I could help Mother in her work of dressing vegetables, preparing dough of Atta and Mayda and rolling chapatis and Puris etc. Mother was very glad. After a few days, I wanted initiation from Mother and she gave me gladly. She sprinkled water from her Puja vessels to my body saying, "Let all the sins committed in previous lives go away from him and let all the sins committed in this life, knowingly or unknowingly, go away from him." Thus she purified my body and gave me initiation.

Sri Ramakrishna was performing austere Sadhana at Dakshineswar and he realised that God is the same whether you call him by the name of Rama, Krishna, Kali, Allah or Jesus. People thought he was mad. So they wanted to drag him down to an ordinary householder with the help of marriage. He was married at the age of about 22 years with Sarada Devi, when she was only 5 years 4 months old. After marriage Sri Ramakrishna went to Dakshineswar again and was absorbed in Sadhana. People at Jayarambati took him to be mad. So Mother wanted to see him and serve him. When she came, Ramakrishna asked her, "Have you come to drag me down to worldliness?" Mother replied, "No, I have come to help you in your spiritual attainment." Now Ramakrishna wanted to test his celebacy by allowing Mother to sleep with him in his own bed for six months. One night Ramakrishna began to think in this way. "People are mad to enjoy with women. Here is your wife. You also can enjoy. But if you do that, you will not progress in spiritual life." So saying he tried to touch her body, but before touching he was immersed in deep Samadhi for the whole night. Mother never wanted to drag him down to worldliness. Therefore Ramakrishna said, "If she was not so good, I might have lost my strict celebacy." He looked her as his Mother and also as Mother Kali. When we were coming to Mother she would cook herself and distribute food to her children with love and tenderness. She had no idea of difference between Hindu, Muslim or Christian. She loved all and used to say, "All are my children". If any devotee would say, "Mother, I am unable to control my mind and therefore cannot meditate." Mother's reply was "Pray to God and try to spend more time in meditation and go on with telling your beads." Sometimes she would say, "Is my mind different from my children's minds?" I can meditate and concentrate my mind whenever I sit down for the same. I can see God whenever I pray to him." She advised her disciples not to look into the shortcomings of others but to look at their good qualities only. She also said, "Look at your own shortcomings only and then you will improve slowly." Mother used to say, "I am the Mother of all, the good as well as the bad. If my boy or girl has played with dust and made his or her body dirty, here am I, the Mother ready to clean their bodies with the border of my cloth and put them in my lap'. Though Mother was very kind to all, she was strict for those who wanted to lead the life of a Sannyasi. Once the mother of a boy, who went to Belur Math to stay on there as a Sannyasi, wept catching hold of Mother's feet and requested her to get back her son home. Mother's reply was, "How can I drag my boy to lead the life of a house-holder, when he wants to lead the life of renunciation?"Mother had Rheumatic pain in her knee and left leg. I used to rub medicated oil on her leg. One day an idea came into my mind I thought if Mother's Rheumatic pain comes to me, then Mother will be allright. With this idea I connected my knee and the palm to Mother's knee and began to think that her pain may come

to me. Mother immediately said, "What are you thinking? This body has become old, it must go, you live long and serve Sri Ramakrishna and the humanity at large. Her "Updesh" (उपदेश्य) was very simple, but difficult for us to follow. She said, "My dear boy, keep yourself free from desires then you will get freedom from bondage. Desire (वासना) is at the root of all evils. Try to get rid of ego. Your ego is standing like a wall in between you and your God. You will see God as soon as this is removed. God is very kind. If you go three steps towards him, he will come three hundred steps towards you. Don't be disheartened. Pray to God and He will give you strength (शक्ति)." I never saw her in Samadhi. But Yogeen Maa and Golap Maa, the two great lady disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, who slept in the same room with Mother had seen her in Samadhi. She performed all household duties and also could tell her beads one lakh times a day. I pray to mother to bless us all, so that we may be free from bondage (बन्धन) and may have realization.



"Pray to the Divine Mother, begging Her to give you unswerving Love and adamantine faith"

—Sri Ramakrishna.

'Trika'—the Cream of Kashmir Saivism

—*Swami Lakshman Joo*

नरशक्तिशिवात्मकं त्रिकं
हृदये या विनिधाय भासयेत् ।
प्रणमामि परामनुत्तरां
निजभासां प्रतिभाचमत्कृतिम् ॥[1]

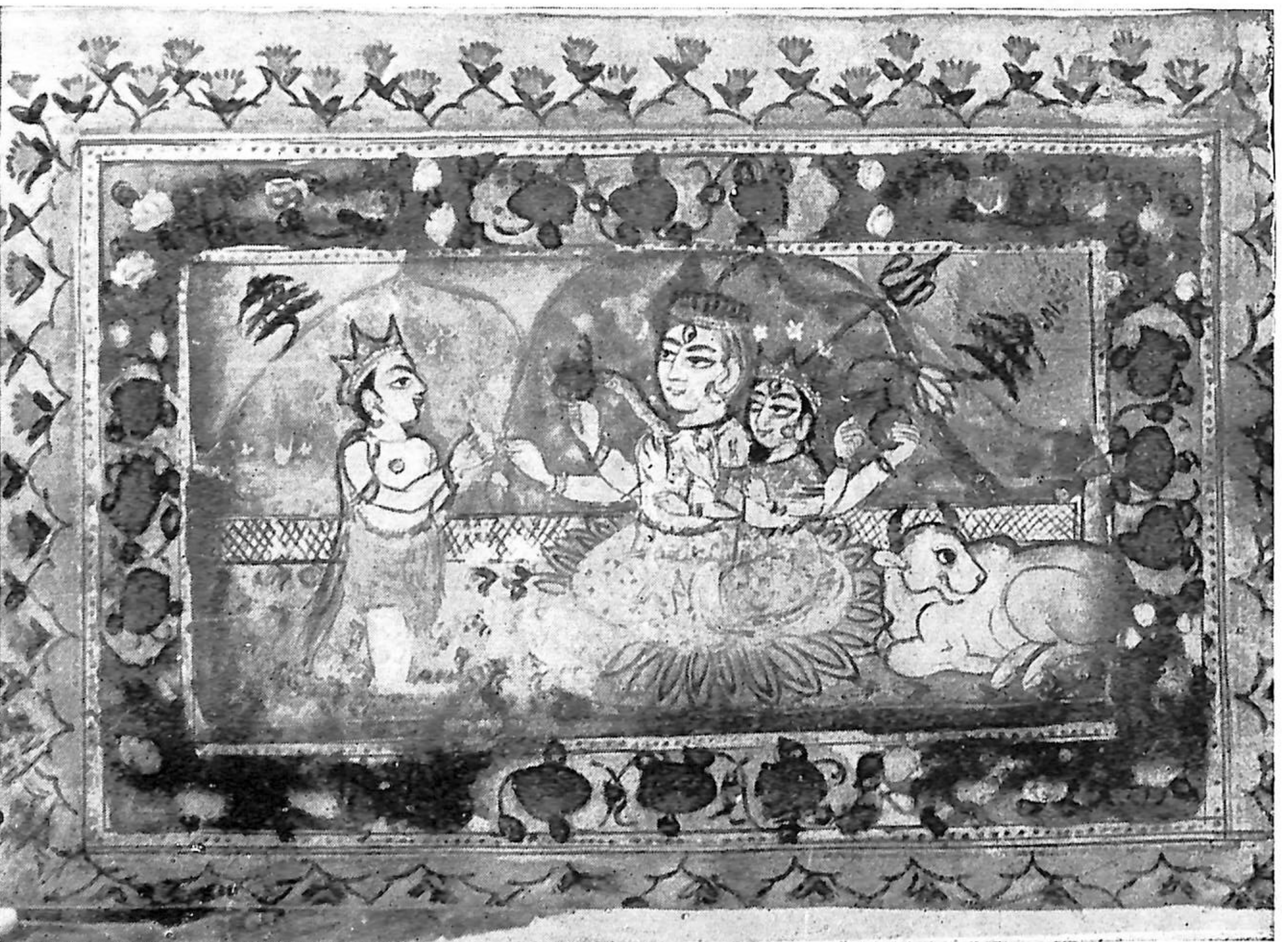
Abhinavagupta

Kashmir Saivism is called Trika Philosophy. Trika means the three-fold science of man and his world. In fact, an individual (Mita Pramatri) carries with him three-fold consciousness: subjective, cognitive and objective along with his world. That is, he moves down from his subjective cycle to objective cycle through his cognitive cycle along with his world. He always moves from subjective to objective through the cognitive cycle but is unable to return to his original point (Para Pramatri Bhava). Thus, he remains always stuck in objective point. On the contrary, an elevated soul or universal consciousness (Para Pramatri) moves from subjective to objective consciousness through congitive consciousness and returns to his original state at the same time. So, both his cycles of coming down and going up are at his disposal, whereas the individual soul only moves down and is not capable of returning to his original state (Para Pramatri Bhava).

Trika philosophy teaches us that the reality of being is not complete in moving down from Pramatri-Bhava (Siva state) to Prameya-Bhava (Nara state) only. It becomes complete by rising up again from Prameya Bhava (Nara state) to Pramatri Bhava (Siva state) along with the individual's world; where he feels fullness of his nature in the real aspect of three-fold science and his world. That is Trika Philosophy.

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1. *Trika Philosophy consists in the union of three-fold nature of Nara (Mita Pramatri or individual Jeeva), Shakti (Cosmic Energy) and Shiva (Para Pramatri i.e. supreme reality) which is revealed while being established in the universal centre of supreme consciousness. I offer salutation to that Transcendental Supreme which is simultaneously interinsic splendour and miraculous play of consciousness—the noumenal and phenomenal aspects of the universe.*



Siva & Parvati

(An ancient painting from J & K State)

This Trika Philosophy does not cover the objective, cognitive, and subjective cycles only but it also covers all the three aspects that shine in this whole universe. This Trika system, in other words, covers the three states of being: wakefulness (Jagrat), dreaming (Swapna) and sound sleep (Susupti); the three states of action: creation (Sristi), protection (Sthithi), and destruction (Samhara); the three states of the world: Bhu, Bhuvah and Svah; the three states of Being: Nara, Sakti and Siva; the three states of means: anavopaya, saktopaya, and sambhavopaya, and all other three-fold states which exist in this universe[2].

Thus, Trika philosophy teaches us that Siva-Bhava is not present there at the stage where you are capable of descending down and incapable of rising up to your original state. Trika philosophy teaches us how you can maintain the Siva-Bhava and become capable of coming down and rising up. So, the process, if it ends in coming down and not in being able to rise up again, is incomplete. It will be complete when you come down and also are able to rise again, and thus keeping coming down and rising up again. This is complete. Readers have to understand that this Trika philosophy is the cream of Kashmir Saivism

In conclusion you have to know that when you come down and are unable to rise up again you are jiva - an ignorant being. This is the difference between jiva and Siva.

At the stage when you are capable of coming down and rising again you do not remain as an individual; you are rather the Master of the whole universe. And there ends your journey because you have reached your original state of being, that is Universal Consciousness. Om Shanti.!

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2. *Editor's note. Readers may refer to—*

त्रयीं तिस्रो वृत्तीस्त्रिभुवनमथो त्रीनपि सुरा–
नकाराद्यैवर्णैस्त्रिभिरभिधत् तीर्णविकृतिः ।
तुरीयं ते धाम ध्वनिभिरवरुन्धानमणुभिः
समस्तं व्यस्तं त्वां शरणद गृणात्योमितिपदम् ॥

Mahimna Stotra-27

'O Giver of refuge with three letters A, U, M indicating the three Vedas, the three states (walking, dreaming and dreamless sleep), the three worlds and the three Gods (Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra), the word Om mentions Thee separately. United in the subile sound (Nada) the words 'Om' collectively mentions Thee—Thy Absolute Transcendent state.'

(Translation by Swam Pavitrananda)

Mother-Worship, Modern Times & Sri Ramakrishna

Swami Jitatmananda

Love of God is embedded in the very root of Indian life. Poets, Philosophers, Kings, commoners, one and all, know the joy and need of a spiritual basis of life. Despite all political topsy-turvydom through centuries of foreign domination, Kumbha Mela, Benares Bathing ghats, or Tirupati Temple draw even today thousands and thousands of Indians in their precincts. In spite of the widest possible variety of religious traditions like Shaivism, Vaishnavism, Shaktas, Shankarites, Ramanujites, or Madhvas the one common passion is always there—love of God. A voice speaks to the Indian mind, "This world is transient. Love God only. Conquer desires. Conquer fear and misery. Attain immortality." This is the commonest sentiment of Indian life which has been expressed in the great lines of the Mundaka Upanishad :-

"The Atman interpenetrates all this cosmic universe, the heavens, the internal world, the vital forces of life and the mind of men. Know that Atman alone. Give up all other vain talks. For that is the way to immortality."

The soul that kneels in reverence and love for the dear God always thinks of itself as a child. And to a child none is dearer than the mother. The semitic religions of the Arabic desert, where the all-protecting and all-powerful God, the father, is the most desired image of Godhead, could not develop this mother aspect of God. The Christians developed it later, where Mother Mary represented the great Mother power that bears and holds up the child Jesus who is also the saviour. "But" as Sister Nivedita wrote in her book on *Kali, the Mother,* "it is in India that this thought of the mother has been realised in its completeness".

"Why do we worship thousands of Gods and goddesses?" This question was once asked to Swami Vivekananda. At once came the startling reply, "Because we have the Himalayas". In the Gita, Lord Krishna says "Among the water-reservoirs I am the sea. Among the mountains I am the Himalayas."

From time immemorial men and women in India have gone to the Himalayas in search of God. That toweringly high, austere, eternally pure, and immaculate white snowrange brought to the Indian mind the concept of Shiva who is eternally merged in the meditation of the Atman. They say Shiva never opened his eyes to

the multidimensional shadow-play of this mutable universe. He remained absorbed in the bliss of the Atman. "To one who is constantly in the bliss of the Atman, the Chimera of the world fails to create any enchantment," writes the poet of Shiva Mohimna Stotra. Shiva is the eternal witness, the Purusha. the eternally existing and conscious cosmic principle.

But below the eternal snowrange lay the vast green panorama of life, vegetation, love, sorrow, power and passion. Indians imagined the green foot-hills as the visible expression of divine Mother herself—the Prakriti or the Shakti. The Tibetans call the Everest foothills as "Qomolangma" or "Goddess mother of the world."

It is this eternally creative, dynamic and sustaining aspect of God that inspired the motivation of Shakti worship in Indian mind. In Chandisaptasati, Shakti is worshipped in this all-powerful, all loving aspect of mother who saves her children from the demons of ignorance and evil and lifts them up to the bliss of a perfect and divine life. Shakti, the principle of cosmic energy in the Indian psyche, slowly evolved as Divine Mother. Indians have worshipped the Divine Mother in countless names and ways. From Kanyakumari and Minakshi, to Kali, Tara, Sodashi, Parvati, Bhairavi, Chinnamsta, Lakshmi, Saraswati, Bagala all these and countless others are the names in which Indians have offered inspired invocations to the Divine Mother, throughout the length and breadth of the vast sub-continent.

In Indian religious thinking the Divine Mother has mostly been given a more prominent place than the male principal of the Godhead. Kali, for instance, rides on the body of Shiva. Radha, according to Vaishnavite tradition, is the incarnation power of Krishna. Probably that is why in the traditional way the name of Radha is placed before the name of Krishna or the name of Sita comes before the name of Rama, and not vice versa. In the North, Mother Annapurna is imagined as the giver of food and shelter to Shiva. In the South mother Meenakshi is thought superior to the figure of Shiva. Devi Kanyakumari as the symbol of eternal virginal purity commands the unquestioning devotion of Indians through the ages who consider the transcendence over the physical world of passion and pain as the supreme spiritual attainment of humanity. Various myths and rituals slowly developed centring round the worship of the Divine Cosmic principle. In Bengali homes, for instance, Durga comes once a year as the daughter of the household with her sons and daughters. Kartika, Ganesha, Lakshmi and Saraswati. Durga is also called Uma or Parvati. Bengali Mothers at home wait all the year long for the annual home-coming of their Divine Daughter, Durga who is the consort of Shiva himself. But is she the little daughter as she looks like ? No. Kamala Kanta, the Sadhak poet of Bengali, consoles the queen-mother of Giriraj who pines to see her daughter Durga. Kamalakanta says, "O Mother Girirani, why do you weep for your daughter ? Do not you know she

view to saving morally their own younger generation they themselves are resorting to religious and spiritual values which they once rejected as opium of the people. Today's technetronic America tried to make its foundations on man as 'a tool-making animal' as Benjamin Franklin once defined. The result is obviously frustrating. Despite conquest of space and immense technological development, man has not progressed far from an animal life. American man, by and large, has been imprisoned by its socalled civilised society", as the USA Supreme Court Chief Mr. Warran commented on the unthinkable rise of crime and murder in USA in 1980. (Time: March 22, 1981)

Pulitzer-Prize winning American writer Theodore Roszak in his latest book **Where The Wasteland Ends** has tried to expose all scientific philosophies as basically "reductionist", as all these philosophies have tried to reduce man to an atavistic entity. The recent craze for Eastern mysticism, meditation, Vedanta and Zen among the western youth is, according to Mr. Roszak, an expression of "higher sanity". Eminent British psychiatrist R. D. Laing in his celebrated book **Politics of Experience** has categorically asked the Freudian psychiatrists to begin their treatment with a firm belief in the inherent divinity of human individuals, and not libido. Psychlogist Jacob Needleman, Professor of Stanford University has argued in his book **A Sense of Cosmos** that the western society can save itself by accepting the norms and age old traditions of the Indian family life where such a holy relation exists between father, son and daughter.

This growing impact of oriental values on the modern western thinking and especially the influence of Vedanta began, as the London orientologist A. L. Basham had pointed out, from Vivekananda's first overwhelming impact on the Western scene in the end of last century. Mr. Basham considers Vivekananda as the first initiator of his historic "counter attack from the East". And Vivekananda is, at bottom, only a voice of his master, Sri Ramakrishna. A worshipper of Kali, Ramakrishna equally embraced all other avenues to Godhead, even the ways of Christians and Muslims. And througout his life he asserted again and again that it is the worship of God as Divine Mother that will lead quickest to purity and perfection in this materialistic age of sensory pleasures.

Outwardly Ramakrishna remained a worshipper of Divine shakti whom the poets of Bengal glorified through their songs. But, as Romain Rolland said, "his inner life embraced the whole multiplicity of men and Gods". Ramakrishna stood before the vision of Rolland, as 'the younger brother of Christ", who is also 'more enriched by the universe'. Sister Nivedita wrote out of her own realisation, "Ramakrishna, the Child of Kali represents humanity". And Ramakrishna's life-long worship of the Divine Mother, both in the image of the temple and in women in general, represent the way out of the moral predicament of modern humanity.

●●●

SHANKARACHARYA'S

HYMN TO GAURI (PARVATI)

Shri Jankinath Kaul 'Kamal'

Introduction

This lulling hymn to Gauri-Parvati, the inseparable consort of Lord Siva is soothingly transforming. Recitation of the hymn impressed me first when it was repeated by devotees at Kshirbhavani in Tulmool village at the evening congregational prayer (sandya arti), one day, when I had been there with my maternal uncle after, a time my loving father had passed away in the prime of his youth. I was about twelve years old then. Although I could not understand Sanskrit, yet I loved to mutter the verses thereafter to myself, invoking Goddess Rajnya of my own imagination.

Later, even though inclined to study the Vedanta Philosophy after I, by chance, read the third volume of the Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, my devotion to Goddess Parvati did not fade. Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna Parmahansa (an early edition purchased at Lahore in 1937) gave more strength to this faith and the influence of both carried me safely through. This, reconciliatory understanding of the systems in Vedanta, Shakta and Shaiva philosophies together with development in understanding Sanskrit language gives me this courage of translating these verses for the benefit of those friends and devotees who cannot understand Sanskrit well.

The hymn is ascribed to Adi Shankaracharya. The preliminary four qualifications of a spiritual aspirant, as enunciated by the great Sankara in his *Tattwa Bodha* (knowledge of the self) and *Vivekachudamani* (the crest jewel of descrimination), can well be traced in the first three verses.

a. Discrimination is suggested in the first two lines of the first verse. Here one is automatically led to search for the ultimate Truth in ones own heart. World is a play and its basic truth is to be sought after to obtain perennial joy.

b. Renunciation of all desires is very much needed for treading the higher path of the knowleege of Self. This is evident from the first line of the second verse.

c) The third qualification is the six-fold glory in Sadhana : i) control of mind, ii) control of external organs, iii) abstinence, iv) tolerance, v) unflinching faith, and vi) concentration. This is hinted in the first line of the third verse. These are the internal means of the practical eight-fold yoga as enumerated by Patanjali.

d) The fourth qualification is the 'Desire for liberation' which is declared in the third line of the third verse. Unless there is an earnest desire for realizing the Truth, how can one adopt the right means to obtain it !

Not only this, but also the other systems of realizing Godhead are mentioned in the following verses of the hymn. In the fourth verse, Amakala the basic existence is said to be above all the luxuriant deities of the world-existence. The Vedantic Truth and the Shaiva principle is depicted in the fifth verse. It is the Supreme-consciousness that assumes different forms to pervade all the fields of experience. That is possible through the power of Maya. The sixth verse summarises the Kundalini Yoga, the realization of the lightening-like subtleness of the ultimate Reality. In the seventh verse alphabetical evolution of the Reality in cosmic I-ness, as the first produced sound is given in nut-shell. This is very well explained by Abhinavagupta in his works. The eighth verse tells of the unconditional and natural action of Divine Play. It is the playful dance of the Universal Mother. In the ninth verse, the universe, animate and inanimate, is said to be transfixed in the all-pervading Self like beads in a rosary. In the tenth verse it is made clear that this unintentional play of the Lord is only for the protection of all this creation.

In this way, the essence of spiritual reality is described in this aphoristic hymn to Gauri Parvati. Let us also get some inspiration by reciting and understanding the hymn, as our elder generation has been doing.

May Gauri grant abiding peace to all.

श्रीमद्आद्य शंकराचार्यकृत
गौरीस्तुतिः

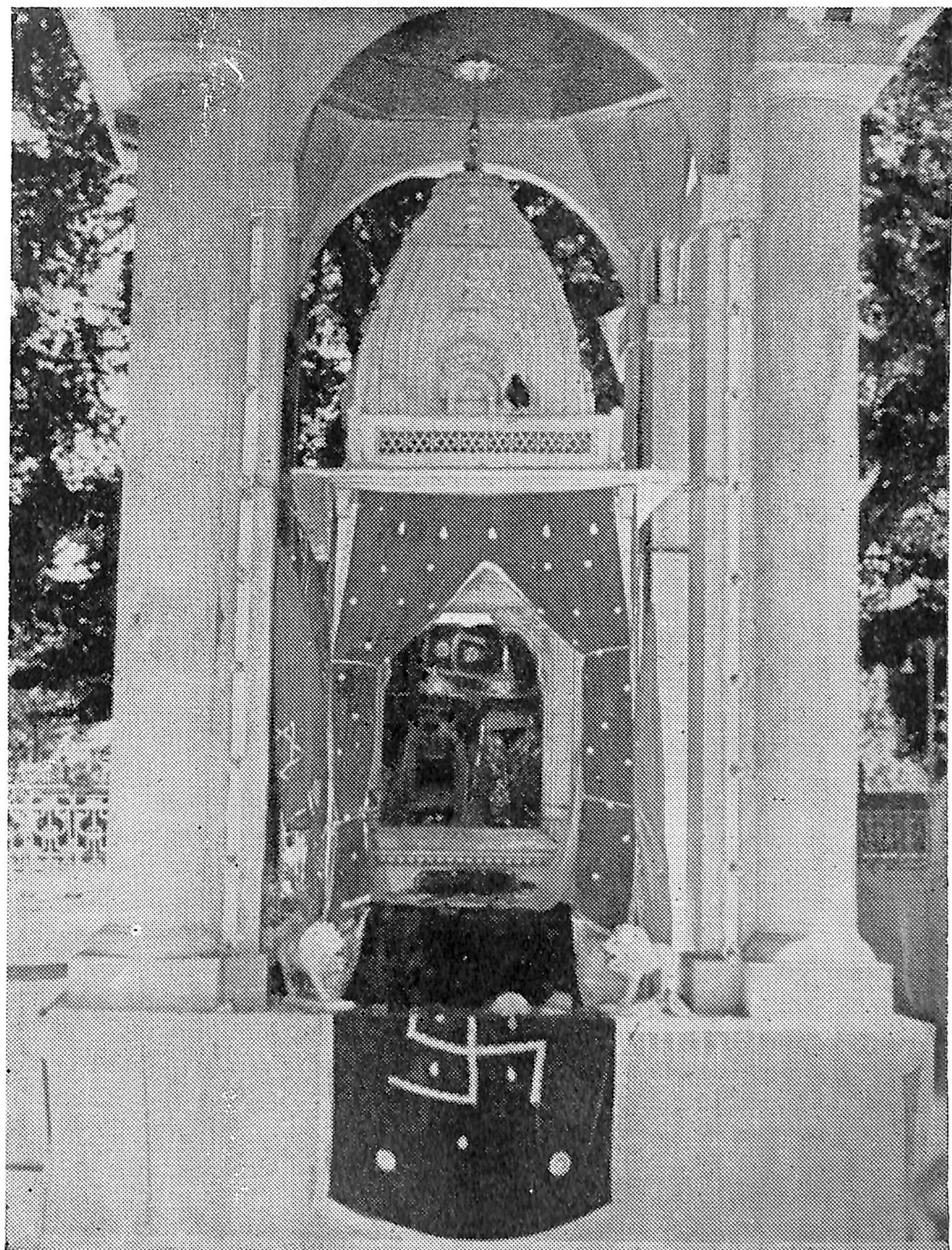
Verse No. 1

लीलारब्धस्थापित - लुप्ताखिललोकां
लोकातीतैर् योगिभिरन्तर - हृदि मृग्याम् ।
बालादित्य - श्रेणिसमान - द्युतिपुंजां
गौरीं अम्बां अम्बुरुहाक्षीं अहं ईडे ॥

Translation

HYMN TO GAURI

I pay homage to Gauri, the lotus-eyed untained Mother of Universe, who, in Her Divine play, creates, sustains and dissolves all the fields of experience of life;



Sri Kshir Bhawani

who is eagerly sought after by yogis in their heart and who shines forth in a flood of soothing radiance like that of numerous morning suns.

Commentary

Gauri is a name of Parvati, the consort of Lord Śiva, in an early conception of Her. The name is generally given to an eight-year old girl. Esoterically it means the Supreme Consciousness which is not in the sprouting mood and yet is to sprout.

'Lotus eyes' is a symbol of charming beauty which is pure and taintless. This is a speciality with the Goddess in Her transcendental as well as immanent aspect. 'Divine Play' is unconditional sportive mood of Parvati, the universal Mother, who is always inseparable from the Supreme Lord. Yogis or seekers of Reality experience the Divine Effulgence in meditation dissolving all the worlds of different experiences.

Verse 2

आशा-पाश-क्लेश-विनाशं निदधानां
पादाम्भोज-ध्यान-पराणां पुरुषाणाम् ।
ईशीं ईशार्धाङ्गहरां तां तनुमध्याम्, गौरीं० ॥

Translation

I pray to lotus-eyed Mother Gauri of surpassing beauty of Her narrow waist, who is the consort of Siva and who, with loving grace, cuts asunder the painful net of expectations (and desires) of those devotees who constantly meditate on Her lotus Feet.

Commentary

'Narrow waist' is a sign of female beauty, which corresponds to the esoteric meaning of the Central (vein) path, traversed in yoga. It is called the Sushumna Marg, the Royal Road through which the primeval energy leads to the Divine Palace called Sahasrara, where Siva-Shakti rest in universal splendour.

The source of expectations is desire which entangles the soul (Jiva) in the net of pleasure and pain. This gets destroyed by intense Sadhana (spiritual practice) and divine grace. 'Lotus Feet' represent the dual course of cognition and action which are brought forth by the will aspect of Divine Mother, who is one with Her Lord in governing the universe.

Verse 3.

प्रत्याहार-ध्यान-समाधि-स्थिति-भाजां
नित्यं चित्ते निर्वृत्तिकाष्टा कलयन्तीम् ।
सत्यज्ञानानन्दमयीं तां तडिताभां, गौरीं० ॥

I prostrate myself before the lotus-eyed Mother Parvati who blesses Her devotees with Supreme Joy like the flash of lightening, who Herself is Existence-Knowledge -Bliss and who graces with the Joy of Supreme Consciousness those who are adept in assembling their mind in meditation and concentration.

Commentary

Spiritual splendour is revealed to the Sadhaka unawares like the lightening. Nobody can know when and in what condition does this lightening touch of divine Joy come. One has, therefore, to be always aware and ready to receive it. Sadhaka is advised to remain in constant practice of spiritual disciplines and meditation. He realizes the three aspects of Divine Mother... ...the Supreme Consciousness.

Every kind of impression or limited thought is to be eradicated before Divine union of individual soul with universal self is possible by divine grace, which persuades perfect concentration. Mind is no mind in that state.

Verse No. 4

चन्द्रापीडानन्दित–मन्द–स्मित–वक्त्रां
चन्द्रापीडालङ्कृत–लोलालकभाराम् ।
इन्द्रोपेन्द्राभ्यर्चित–पादाम्बुज–युग्मां, गौरीं० ॥

Translation

May this obeisance be to the lotus-eyed Mother Parvati, to whose face the Joyful mood of Shankara with crescent moon as His head-ornament, brings cheer; to whose locks the moonlight of His head give a shine and to whose lotus-feet worship is offered by Indra and Vishnu, the lords of mental and physical luxury, respectively.

Commentary

'Crescent moon' is the emblem of Ama-kala, the basic existence of Godhood in its dual process of evolution and involution. The unconditional playful mood of the Mother is universal luxury of Siva. Locks denote the groups of innumerable thought-currents which are soothed into divinity during awareness of Supreme-consciousness.

Indra is the lord of heaven (swarg loka), the mental plane of desirability of an individual. Vishnu is the lord of universe bestowing material and spiritual prosperity. Divine Mother is the source of all the energies and powers... ...both individual and universal.

Verse No. 5

नानाकारैः शक्तिकदम्बैर्भुवनानि
व्याप्य स्वैरं क्रीडति यासौ स्वयमेव ।
कल्याणीं तां कल्पलतामानति–भाजां, गौरीं० ॥

Translation

My salutation to the untainted Mother in Gauri, who is propitious towards Her devotees and fulfils all their desires and who assuming different forms with numerous powers, pervades all the fields of experience and holds this play of creation, preservation and absorption, out of Her own will.

Commentary

Just as a mother is always drawn to favour Her child unconditionally, so is Divine Mother Parvati gracious to reveal the True-self to the earnest devotees in all the different froms of existence. Gods and goddesses are only certain respective limited powers to help the soul in different fields of life. Mother's emergence is unconditional and helpful.

Verse No. 6

मूलाधारात्–उत्थितवन्तीं विधिरन्ध्रं
सौरं चांद्रं धाम विहाय ज्वलिताङ्गीम् ।
ध्येयां सूक्ष्मां सूक्ष्मतनुं तां तडित्–आभां, गौरीं० ॥

Translation

I pray to the untainted Mother Kundalini, the primeval energy who (on being awakened through constant and faithful spiritual practice——sadhana) rises from Her abode, the basic root (sacro-coccygeal plexus) and crossing the solar and lunar planes, enters Her universal ...sahasrara, with flashing effulgence, who as subtle and subtler still is contemplated upon by yogis (those endowed with intense devotion) and who alone is worthy of being worshipped.

Commentary

Kundalini is the coiled energy lying dormant in the bottom of the spinal stem of every creature. Practice for rousing this supreme energy to wakefulness is incidentally enjoined to an earnest aspirant by a divine being well-versed in the spiritual practice and theory. Solar and lunar planes correspond to Pingala and Ida which are the two subtle nerves (nadis) to perpetuate the sukshma prana (the subtle vital air) through Madhya Marga. Mind becomes steady when breath flows through sushumna. This is the highest state of yoga called 'Unmani awastha'. Universal energy of divine joy is experienced like lightening as a result of the awakening of supreme power......Kundalini.

Verse No. 7

आदिक्षान्ताम् अक्षरमूर्त्या विलसन्तीं
भूते भूते भूत–कदम्बं प्रसवित्रीम् ।
शब्दब्रह्मानन्दमयीं तां प्रणवाख्यां, गौरीं० ॥

Translation

I propitiate the lotus-eyed, the universal Mother who evolves through alphabetical formations from अ to ज्ञ in which the last alphabet is ह; who produces groups of creation ...animate and inanimate, in the compositional process of the five elements; who is the soundless sound of the universe and whose name, as explained by the Vedas, is Pranava, the three syallabled AUM.

Commentary

Matrika chakra is the representation of alphabets from अ to ह. Its key note is the first sound produced by pronouncing the word अहं. After this the will-power (Iccha Sakti) of Parama Siva branches forth in two divisions—Knowledge (Jnana sakti) and Action (Kriya). From the former originates the seat of thought and feeling i. e. Antahkarna (collective name of Manas, Buddhi and Ahankara) whose correlative offshoots are the five organs of cognition (Jnanendriyas) while from the latter spring forth the ten vital airs (Pranas) and five organs of action (Karmendriyas). The epitome of the alphabet is therefore, अहम् the first universal movement which is to be realized as the all-pervading supreme consciousness called Poornahanta. AUM is the symbol. Its explanation is the universe.

Verse No. 8

यस्य कुक्षौ लीनमखण्डं जगत्-अण्डं
भूयो भूयः प्रादुर्-अभूत् अक्षतमेव ।
भर्त्रा सार्धं तां स्फटिकाद्रौ विहरन्तीम्, गौरीं० ॥

Translation

May this obeisance be to the untainted Mother of universe, who absorbs in Her lap the cosmos and ever again produces in its fullness... ...thus sprouting in a playful dance with Her consort on the white-marbled mountain... ...the Kailasa.

Commentary

The Divine Mother brings about dissolution of this universe into the seed form known as Prakriti, and produces again at will into the creation. This is Her unconditional and independent play which involves knowledge and action.

Sushumna blooms in Sahasrara chakra which is situated at the crown of the head. It is the abode of Lord Siva and thus a seat of perfect bliss and highest knowledge. This is the Mount Kailasa.

Verse No. 9

यस्यां एतत् प्रोतमशेषं मणिमाला
सूत्रे यद्वत् क्वापि चरं क्वाप्यचरं च ।
तामध्यात्म-ध्यान-पदव्या गमनीयां, गौरीं० ॥

Translation

Reverence to the Mother in Supreme consciousness untainted like lotus leaf in whom is all this universe, animate and inanimate, transfixed like the beads of jewels in a rosary, and who is realized by yogis through meditation under spiritual discipline.

Commentary

Supreme energy pervades everything seen, felt or experienced in the universe. This can be assimilated through meditation and concentration alone.

Verse No. 10

नित्य: सत्यो निष्कल एको जगत् ईश:
साक्षी यस्य: सर्ग विधौ संहरगो च ।
विश्वत्राण क्रीडनशीला शिवपत्नीं, गौरीं० ॥

Translation

Prostration to the lotus-eyed Mother Gauri, whose sportive acts of creation, preservation and absorption are witnessed by the one eternal, immense and immaculate Lord of the Universe. In this sportive dance of Mother Goddess is verily the protection of Her devotees.

Commentary

Sakti and Siva are not two entities. It is like a river and its bed... ...one cannot stand without the other. It is the state of thinking without thinking and doing without doing.

Sportive dance of universal Mother gives protection to struggling souls.

Verse No. 11

प्रातः काले भावविशुद्धः प्रणिधानात्
भक्ता नित्यं जल्पति गौरीदशकं य: ।
वाचां सिद्धि सम्पदं उच्चैः शिव-भक्ति
तस्यावश्यं पर्वतपुत्री विदधाति, गौरीं० ॥

Translation

Parvati, the daughter of Himalya, grants graceful speech, great prosperity and devotion to Supreme Lord Siva, to one of pure intellect who recites this tenfold hymn to Gouri-Parvati every morning with pure devotion.

Commentary

This is verily the fruit of intense and earnest devotion to Mother Goddess which encourages the path finder to stick to one-pointedness during his Sadhana and never to falter.

May peace be to all.

●●●

Bhairva Stotra of Abhinavagupta

K L. Swaroop

अभिनवोत्पलसौरभसंस्कृतं
रसयतः शिवदृष्टिरसायनम् ।
इह सदैव मदैव निरामयं
हृदयमस्तु मम प्रतिभामयम् ॥[1] —मधुराज

Abhinavagupta, the most luminous star in the galaxy of the Advaita Saiva philosophers of Kashmir Saivism was born sometime between 950 AD and 960 AD[2]. His father Narsihmagupta was a deeply religious person with a high order of scholastic achievements. His mother Vimalakala was a pious lady. It is unto this happy couple that Abhinavagupta was born as Yognibhu[3]. As a student his love for studies was so endless that he had to wait upon as many as twenty teachers (Acharyas) of the time and learn the subjects like Dhvani (Rhetorics). Brahmavidya, Dvaita Tantras, Advaita tantras, Krama and Trika Darshan, Boudha Darsana, Jain Darshana etc. etc. While approaching these teachers he had shown extreme sense of humility and devotion with the result they conveyed to him all the secrets of their learnings. His celebrated commentaries called Abhinava Bharti and Lochana on Natyashastra of Bharta and Dhvanyaloka respectively are acclaimed as the the best treatises on Dramaturgy and Rhetorics. After quenching his thirst by drinking from the springs of literture and dramaturgy, he switched over to philosophy. According to his own narration, Laksmanagupta son of Utpaladeva was the first to instruct him on Pratyibijna system of philosophy. Then followed deep studies in other systems of philosophy and various sects of non-dualastic saivism. His philosophical and spiritual attainment were so high that he was undisputedly regarded as a head of all the Saiva sects such as Sidhanta, Vama, Bhairava, Yamla, Kula, Trika, Eka-Vira, Krama, etc. etc. Besides Tantraloka, his Magnum-Opus (37 contoes in 12 volumes), he has as many as fortythree works to his credit and there is conclusive evidence to establish that he wrote many other works which are lost to the vagaries of time. In short the

1. This is the 36th verse of the poem composed by Yogi Madhuraja of Madhura (modern Madurai) who visited Kashmir when he was seventy four years old and became disciple of Abhinavagupta. The poem gives a lucid description of his preceptor. The purport of the verse is :-

par-excellent genius of Abhinavagupta has left a unique mark on the philosophico-religious life of the country which paradoxically becomes more and more distinct with the passage of time. Tradition has it that he left his mortal frame alongwith hundreds of his disciples while reciting verses from Bhairva-Stotra[4] which is reproduced below with a free English rendering :-

व्याप्तचराचरभावविशेषं चिन्मयमेकमनन्तमनादिम् ।
भैरवनाथमनाथशरण्यं त्वन्मयचित्ततया हृदि वन्दे ॥१॥

1. Having become one with Thee, I adore you in the heart of my heart (or worship you from the core of my heart);
You are the first cause of projection, sustinence and dissolution of the Universe and protector of the destitutes ;
Everything sentient and insentient stands prevaded by you;
You are one with the self, one and only one without beginning and end.

"Why should that Universe be unreal ? This is a speculation of the philosophers. After realizing God one sees that it is God himself who has become the Universe and all living beings".

Sri Ramakrishna Paramhamsa.

"May my mind, made refined by the fragrance of Abhinavagupta and Utpaladeva (grand preceptor of Abhinavagupta) and sentimentally surcharged with the tonic of Sivadrasti (a treatise by Somananda propounding Pratyibijna school of philosophy) be always here without ailments (physical and mental) and full of poetic genius."

There is a pun on the Samasta-Pada अभिनवोत्पलसौरभ. Its meaning can also be the fragrance emitted by a newly blossomed lotus. Similarly शिवदृष्टिरसायनं can also mean to get strengthened by the glance of Siva.

2. Abhinavagupta by Dr. K. C. Panday page 9.

3. According to Saiva-Agma if the parents desire that their off-spring should be a Yognibhu, the father has to identify himself with Siva and the mother with Sakti at the time of the conception of the off-spring. The Siva scriptures envisage that it is only a Yognibhu who can cut the gordian knots of monistic Sivasim. Abhinavagupta has himself put a seal of confirmation on this scriptural truth by the very first verse of Tantraloka, which reads as under :-

त्वन्मयमेतदशेषमिदानीं भाति मम त्वदनुग्रहशक्त्या ।
त्वं च महेश सदैव ममात्मा स्वात्ममयं मम तेन समस्तम् ।।१।।

2. By virtue of the power of your grace I experience whole of this Universe as one with Thee; and since you are always everything of mine, whole of this (Universe) is nothing but my own self.

"Iron if once converted into gold by the touch of the philosopher's stone (sparsha-mani), may be kept buried in the ground or thrown into a heap of rubbish, it always remains gold. Similar is the state of him who has attained God. Whether he dwells in the midst of worldly attractions or in the solitude of the forests, nothing will contaminate him.

Sri Ramakrishna Paramhamsa"

स्वात्मनि विश्वगते त्वयिनाथे तेन न संसृतिभीतिकथास्ति ।
सत्स्वपि दुर्धरदुःखविमोहत्रासविदायिषु कर्मगणेषु ।।३।।

3. Despite the fact that the forces of the agents of "KARMA" which are extremely terrifying, delusory and very difficult to resist are at work, there is no question of getting over-awed by them in the World; for mine own-self, Thine-self and the world have gained concurrence.

अन्तक मां प्रति मा दृशमेनां क्रोधकरालतमां विनिधेहि ।
शंकरसेवनचिन्तनधीरो भीषणभैरवशक्तिमयोऽस्मि ।।४।।

4. O Ye God of death! Don't cast your terrifying glance on me. By serving and

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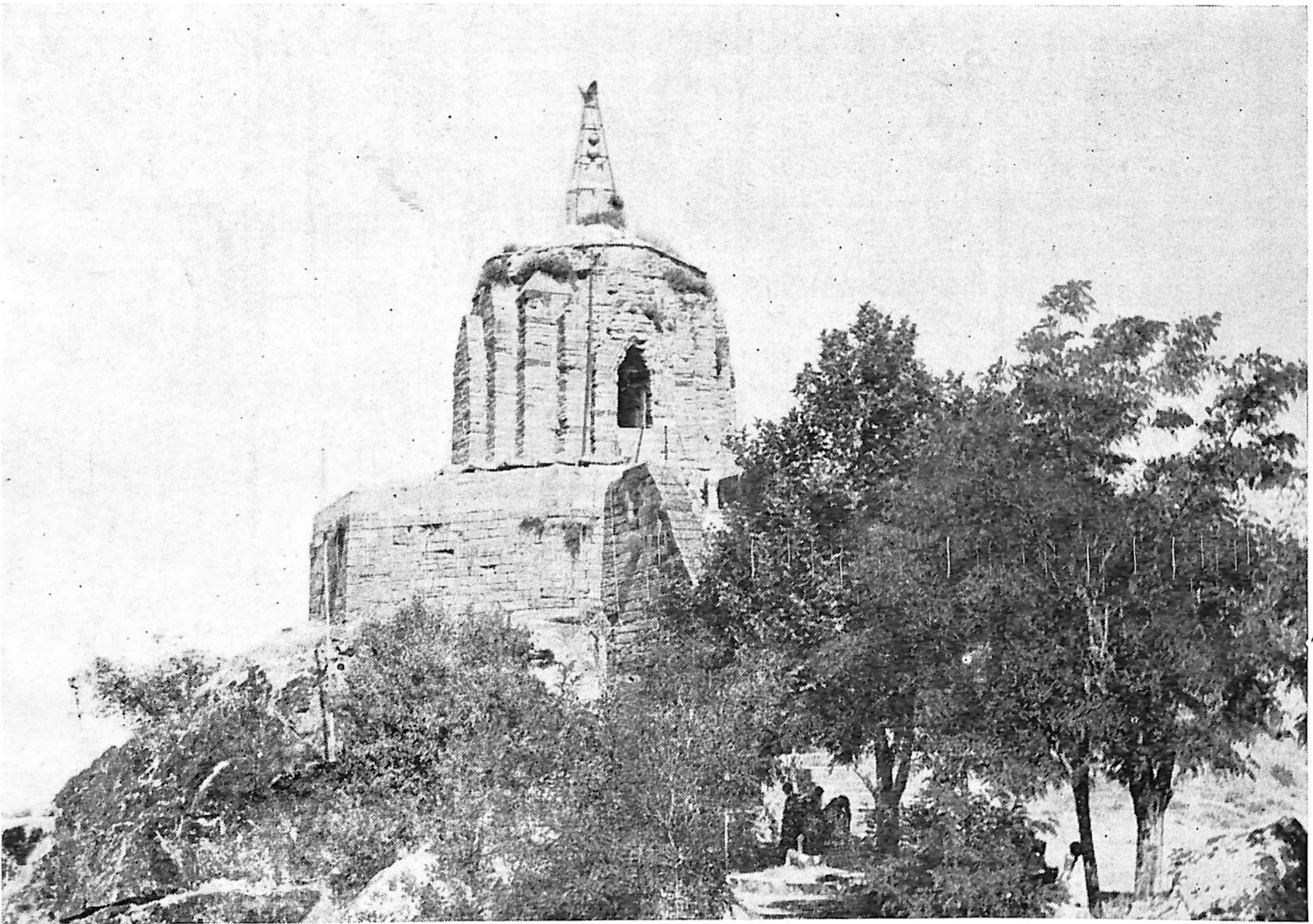
विमलकलाश्रयाभिनवसृष्टिमहा जननी
भरिततनुश्च पञ्चमुखगुप्तरुचिर्जनकः ।
तदुभययामलस्फुरितभावविसर्गमयं
हृदयमनुत्तरामृतकुलं मम स्फुरतात् ।।

भैरवः– the highest Reality. "Bha" denotes maintenance of the Universe, "ra" withdrawal or dissolution and "va" its projection or creation.

ईशावास्यमिदं सर्वं यत्किं च जगत्यांम् जगत् ।

Eyerything in the Universe abides in the Supreme or with Vedantic truth सर्वमिदंखलु ब्रह्म ।

4. अनुग्रहः— It means bestowing upon grace by the Lord which brings about the liberation of the "Jeeva". It is the fifth of पंचकृत्य the five acts brought about by the Lord. The other four being सृष्टि letting go or projecting oneself, स्थिति maintenance, संहारः withdrawal or reabsorption and पिधानः Concealment of the real nature of the self.



Shankaracharya Temple

remembering Lord Siva I have verily become the very embodiment of the powers of Bhairva.

इत्थमुपोढ भवन्मयसंविद्दीधितिदारितभूरितमिस्रः ।
मृत्युयमान्तक कर्मपिशाचैर्नाथ ! नमोऽस्तु न जातुबिभेमि ॥५॥

5. All-pervading darkness of ignorance is cut asunder by the rays of your knowledge which is well-developed and verily one with you. O Ye! the destroyer of death and the God of death I bow to Thee; I am not at all frightened by the malevolent spirits of Karma.

> "A match lighted in a dark room disperses all atonce the accumulated darkness of centuries. Similarly, a single gracious glance of Lord washes away the accumulated sins of innumerable births.
>
> *Sri Ramakrishna Paramhamsa*"

प्रोदितसत्यविबोधमरीचिप्रोक्षितविश्वपदार्थसतत्वः ।
भावपरामृतनिर्भरपूर्णे त्वय्यहमात्मनि निर्वृ तिमेमि ॥६॥

6. The rays of truth and awareness have risen and pervaded all the categories and elements of this Universe. I have gained repose of senses by depending on the (divine) nector of Thine transcendentality.

मानसगोचरमेति यदैव क्लेशदशातनु ताप विधात्री ।
नाथ ! तदैव ममत्वदभेदस्तोत्रपरामृतवृष्टिरुदेति ॥७॥

7. O Lord! When my mind falls a victim to such affliction as cause awful pain to my body, I being one with you, a shower of transcendental nector in the form of hymns comes into being (which destroys the pangs of pain).

शंकर ! सत्यमिदं व्रतदानस्नानतपोभवतापविनाशि ।
तावक शास्त्र परामृतचिन्ता स्यन्दति चेतसि निर्वृ ति धारा ॥८॥

8. O Sankara! It is true by observing fasts, giving charity and practising austerity, Efflictions are destroyed. But by concentrating on the supreme nector of your philosophy, a soothing stream flows in my mind.

"Rituals and other ceremonial work (Sandhya-ahnika) are necessary only so long as one does not acquire a true love as tears of ecstasy do not flow and the hairs of the body do not stand on end at the mere mention of His name.

Sri Ramakrishna Paramhamsa"

नृत्यति गायति हृष्यतिगाढं संविदियं मम भैरवनाथ ।
त्वां प्रियमाप्य सुदर्शनमेकं दुर्लभमन्यजनैः समयज्ञम् ।९।।

9. After having attained your absolute glorified beauty—a stage attained by devotees with great difficulty—my awareness joyfully dances, sings and feels blissful.

> "To Him who is perfect in meditation, salvation is very near" is an old saying. Do you know when a man becomes perfect in meditation ? When, as soon as he sits down to meditate, he loses himself in the sea of spirituality."
>
> *Sri Ramakrishna Paramhamsa.*

वसुरसपौषे कृष्णदशम्यामभिनवगुप्तः स्तवमिदमकरोत् ।
येन विभुभवमरुसन्तापं शमयति झटिति जनस्य दयालुः ।।१०।।

10. This hymn has been composed by Abhinavgupta on the tenth day of dark fortnight of Pausha month in 968—S (Bikrimi). By reciting the hymn all the afflictions of the mighty desert of this World get subdued in no time.



Kalhana And The Rajataranigni

—*Prof S. L. Sadhu*

FOREIGNERS who came to know India superficially referred disparagingly to our forefathers as people without a written history, or even lacking the very sense of history. They carried the impression that we thrive on myths and legends. The discovery of the 12th century work the *Rajatarangini* composed in Sanskrit verse by Kalhana dispelled away such feelings. The *Rajatarangini* is an outstanding work on history.

Kalhana belonged to a noble family closely connected with the court in Kashmir. He has not left any worthwhile details about himself except a hint in the colophone that he is the son of Lord Canpaka who was a minister at the court of Harshadaeva (1089-1101). He also states that he completed the work in the Laukika era 4225 (A. D. 1149) during the reign of Jaisimha. Beyond that very little is known about him. His intellect and personality are to be judged from his monumental chronicle of the kings of Kashmir.

The *Rajatarangini* is spread over eight cantos, each one devoted to the rule of a dynasty of kings, as Gonanda, Pratapaditya, Gonanda restored, Karkota, Utpala, Yasaskara, Lohara I and Lohara II. The rule of the earliest, i.e. Gonanda leads us far back to the days of the Mahabharata war in which Gonanda I fought on the side of the Kurus and was killed. The events in the earlier cantos or books are narrated rather briefly and plastered with legendary accounts and myths.

Kashmir is immensely rich in folklore and legends are associated with every place and phenomenon: hills, lakes, rivers, villages, rocks, boulders, and what not. One of the earliest mentioned in the chronicle is about Damodarodara. This is *karewa* or table—land to the southwest of Srinagar, near the present airport, where Brahmins cursed Damodara II, their king, because he stubbornly refused to feed them till he completed his morning prayers at the river which was at a little distance away. When they made the river flow just in front of him he dismissed it as blackmagic and expressing his resentment uttered 'sarpata' (be gone). The hungry Brahmins felt insulted and pronounced 'Let you be a *sarpa*', and the king

turned into a serpent who, the chronicler tells us, has been seen wriggling and creeping thirstily with steaming breath. Whatever the merit of the legned, it has given the *ordara* (Kashmiri *va'dar)* a name.

There are similar legends about the Wular lake, Sheshnag lake, Konsarnag lake, the founding of the city of Srinagar in the vicinity of Hariparbat, etc. etc. Kalhana has drawn these and other relevant matters from the *Nilamatpurana* and the accounts of earlier chroniclers Suvrata, Padmamihira, Chavillakar, Ratnakar, etc. The well known romance of Heemal, an Aryan princess, and Nagerai, a Naga prince is believed to have been recorded in the work by Ratnakar which is now lost. The tale, however, lives fresh and bubbling in the consciousness of the community and has been reproduced in Kashmiri verse by several poets.

Considering the popularity of Heemal and Na'gerai and other legends, Kalhana cannot be unduly blamed for having inserted them in the chronicle conceived as a *kavya*. The account of the wonders and marvels of Marco Polo who flourished a hundred and fifty years after Kalhana seemed for the most part beyond credence to his contemporaries 'but is now largely confirmed'. However, such episodes do not extend beyond Book III and in recording the events of the Karkota and later dynasties, Kalhana's account is factual and rational.

Kalhana knows his geography well and gives precise location of the events he narrates. He appears to have had a detailed knowledge of the many hill routes across the Pir Panchal range as also the Jhelum valley route. He has correctly placed the Shahiya kingdom of the Kabul valley and is knowledgeable about the Hindukush principalities of the regions beyond the Indus. In referring to the events leading to the death of Shankarvarman he does not falter in his knowledge of the Uri-Muzafarabed-Hazara route. His vivd narration of the escape of Bhoja from the castle at Sirahshila near Shardha in the Kishenganga valley is a tribute to his geographical knowledge of the inaccessible region as also of the gripping suspense he creates. Within the valley proper, of course, he is familiar with various side valleys and landmarks. Likewise he writes with confidence about principalities all around Kashmir in the west, the inaccessible north, and the near and the far south. Competent scholars have recorded their appreciation of his precise geographical knowledge.

The *Rajatarangini* does not present a bare sketchy narrative of events but the reader finds the narrative, wherever necessary, embellished and enlivened with anecdotes that impart to the events a dramatic effect. The episodes, as of the faithless wife of Durlab Vardhana, Lalitaditya's order to burn Srinagar or his death, escapades of Jayapide or his anti-Brahmin policy, the death of Shankarvarmana, the election of Yasaskara, etc., etc., leave a deep impression on the mind and are unforgetable. If one recalls how Suyya was able to drain out flood waters in spite of the stiff

resistance of the establishment, or the several phases of the feud between Ananta and his son Kalasha, or between the latter and his son Harshadeva (1089-1101), one realizes that these episodes and anecdotes have not been inserted for their own sake but to impart vitality and colour, thrill and drama to the narrative.

Kalhana was the scion of a leading family of the age and a man of the world. He could not but have made a deep study of *kavya,* dramaturgy, aesthetics, the epics and apart from chronicles, other forms of classical literature like the *Brahatkatha*, *Arthasastra*, *Panchtantra* and such works as *Kutinimata*, *Desopadesa*, *Narmamala* etc. could not have escaped his attention. As such he should have realized that greed, lust, anger, delusion and other demonaic passions co-exist with love, goodness, fidelity and purity and taken in his stride the demonstration of baser tendencies. But he feels sore at the wantonness of ladies at the court, especially queens e.g, during his incarceration, Harshadeva's principal queen named Sugala had an undisguised liason with his father Kalasha and conspired with him to poison her husband. But the moment Harsha ascended the throne she rushed and unabashedly took her seat to his left. The historian also feels outraged at the faithlessness of ministers, feudal lords and captains of troops. As a historian he should not have lost sight of the fact that in a frontier region like Kashmir more ends are gained through treachery than this world dreams of (Shrivara also expressed his despair that leaders accepted money from both the contending parties simultaneously). In all probability Kalhana could not be so naive as not to know all this but expressed his sorrow and resentment because of his deep patriotic concern for his country. The *Rajatarangini* also displays a number of instances of pettiness, and selfishness of Brahmins which evoke his contempt.

It has been observed by some people that the *Rajatarangini* is, truly a chronicle of the kings of Kashmir as suggested by the title. The 20th century concept of a peoples' history is born of the interaction of many intellectual, moral, philosophical ans cultural movements on a colossal scale and could not have been forestalled in the 12th century Kashmir. Nevertheless, the *Rajatarangini* gives us copious glimpses of the inherent strength of the people. Big feudal barons or *damars* were well-knit as a class and played an effective role in the governance of the state. That they were not a rigid hereditary class is illustrated by Kalhana from the example of a petty villager in the Bhangila district who made handsome profits as a carrier. He buried his wealth in his farm and planned to purchase extensive farmland and finally to join the ranks of *damars*. The *damars* of Devasar, Dakshinpara. Martand, Lar and Hamal were very powerful. Closer to Kalhan's times were the Tantrins, the Ekangas, the Lavanyas and other powerful factions. The full force of the people's might is illustrated in the banishment of Yudhishthira I of the Gonanda dynasty, enthronement of Sandhimati and his later stepping down, and election of Yasaskara as king. That

Pravarsena II could not evict a cobbler from his house till he appeared there personally to satisfy the vanity of the latter is an indication of the potential of the lower classes. Another cobbler Srideva killed Jajja who had usurped Jayapida's throne while the latter was sojourning in the plains outside.

For all his persipicacity, grasp of local politics and court intrigues, Kalhana does not give any indication of his awareness of the consequences of the advent of Islam for the country as a whole and for Kashmir in particular. Around the turn of the first millenium A. D. Mahmud of Ghazni invaded India a number of times, despoiled temples, converted thousands to Islam and carried away innumerable people as slaves. Twice he attempted to invade Kashmir but had to withdraw owing partly to the inclemency of the weather and partly to the stout defence provided by the Lohara garrison. The Sahis of the north west had close relations with the ruling family of Kashmir and Sangramraja provided assistance to Trilochanpal against Mahmud, but any awareness of the gravity of the situation is not esasy to find in the *Rajatarangini,* though the overthrow of the Sahi lock, stock and barrel should have created a near panic in Kashmir. The *Rajataragini* was composed fifty years after the death of Prithvi Raj Chauhan of Delhi. The chronicle does not mention it nor does it spell out the implications of the establishment of the Muslim rule from Ghazni to Delhi and beyond, and the aftermath of the conversions, demolition of temples, etc.*

Kalhana presents kings impartially and independently but does not conceal his preferences. Most of his characters stand out for their individuality. Apart from kings like Lalitaditya, Avantivarman and Didda other characters like Suyya, Devasharma, Mitrasharma, Tunga, etc, are unforgettable. Kalhana does not lack either humour or sarcasm. He conceived the grand work as *kavya* and shaped it accordingly. It is, however, different from *kavyas* of the traditional type. Kalhana's oft-quoted observation

> "Worthy of praise is that power of true poets, whatever it may be, which surpasses even the stream of nectar, in as much as by it their bodies of glory as well as those of others obtain immortality"

is applicable to his own work and person. The *Rajatarangni* confers immortality on kings, warriors and statesmen projected on the canvas of its eight cantos. They bulit towns, palaces and magnificent temples, trying thus to perpetuate their names. But the ravages of time have left not a stone unturned. For the posterity, therefore, Kalhana is both their maker and preserver. As a reward for his creative effort, Kalhana's name is preserved for ever and ever throught the *Rajatarangini* which, despite its shortcomings presents a vast panorama in an epic frame work.

**Kalhana is obviously a Shaivite Brahmin but he makes no mention of stalwarts among Shaivites like Abhinavagupta or Utpal-acharya, of writers like Somadeva and Kshemendra.*

PARMANANDA

Pandit Zinda Koul "Master Ji"

Among the Kashmir Brahmins who chose to give expression to their religious, devotional or philosophical thoughts in Kashmiri verse (which is all that there is of Kashmiri literature, there being no Kashmiri prose to speak of), Parmanand (1791-1879) is by common consent given the highest place. He is less mystical and obscure than his great predecessor, saint Lalla, whose sayings have been translated into several languages and are enjoyed admired even by those who understand very little of them. He is less musical, familiar and realistic than his proximate successor, Pt. Krishan Das of Vanpuh and even his own disciple Pt. Lakshman Ji of Nagam; but he is far profounder than either. He is more accurate in the technique of versification than some of his contemporaries and predecessors, who were more saintly than artistic; and he is every way superior to writers of Puranic stories in narrative verse like the Ramayana and Shivalagna of Pandit Prakash Ram.

The name 'Parmamanda' is very familiar to those Kashmiri Pandits of today who take interest in Kashmiri literature or in Kashmiri religious verse, though it is only the poet's pen-name. Less familiar is his personal name, Pt. Nanda Ram, and still less known is his personal life as life is ordinarily understood. He was the son of Krishna Pandit (Swamina Bharadwaja) and his wife Saraswati Devi. Krishna Pandit lived in the village of Sir near Mattan and was the Patwari (village Accountant) of the latter. He was well read in Persian and could even write fairly good verse in that language A huge manuscript of *Mahabharata* in Persian copied by him is still extant to enable us to guage his capacity for labour. Towards his latter days he became hard of hearing and complained of this to God in the humorous line :

हमे गुफतम खुदावंदा करम कुन ।
नमे गुफतम खुदांवदा करम कुन ।।

"My prayer was 'Lord, be meriful'; and not 'Lord, make me deaf', as Thou seemest to have misunderstood". The paradox has been brought about by the play on the word करम which means (1) mercy and (2) 'me deaf'.

Before the advent of the muslim rule in Kashmir, the Brahmins were generally very learned in Sanskrit language, literature and philosophy. Under the muslim rule this scholarship gradually dwindled and almost disappeared.; it was rather rare in the 18th and 19th centuries. The Brahmins had now to learn Persian for the maintenance of life. In this foreign language, with a few remarkable exceptions (e.g., Munshi Bhavani Das Kachru, the famous author of Bahr-e-taveel) they did not attain to any very great scholarship. The education of the majority was a mere literacy, very few learnt Arabic or even the grammar of Persian. Those who still clung to Sanskrit were a class apart and were revered as Pandits par excellence.

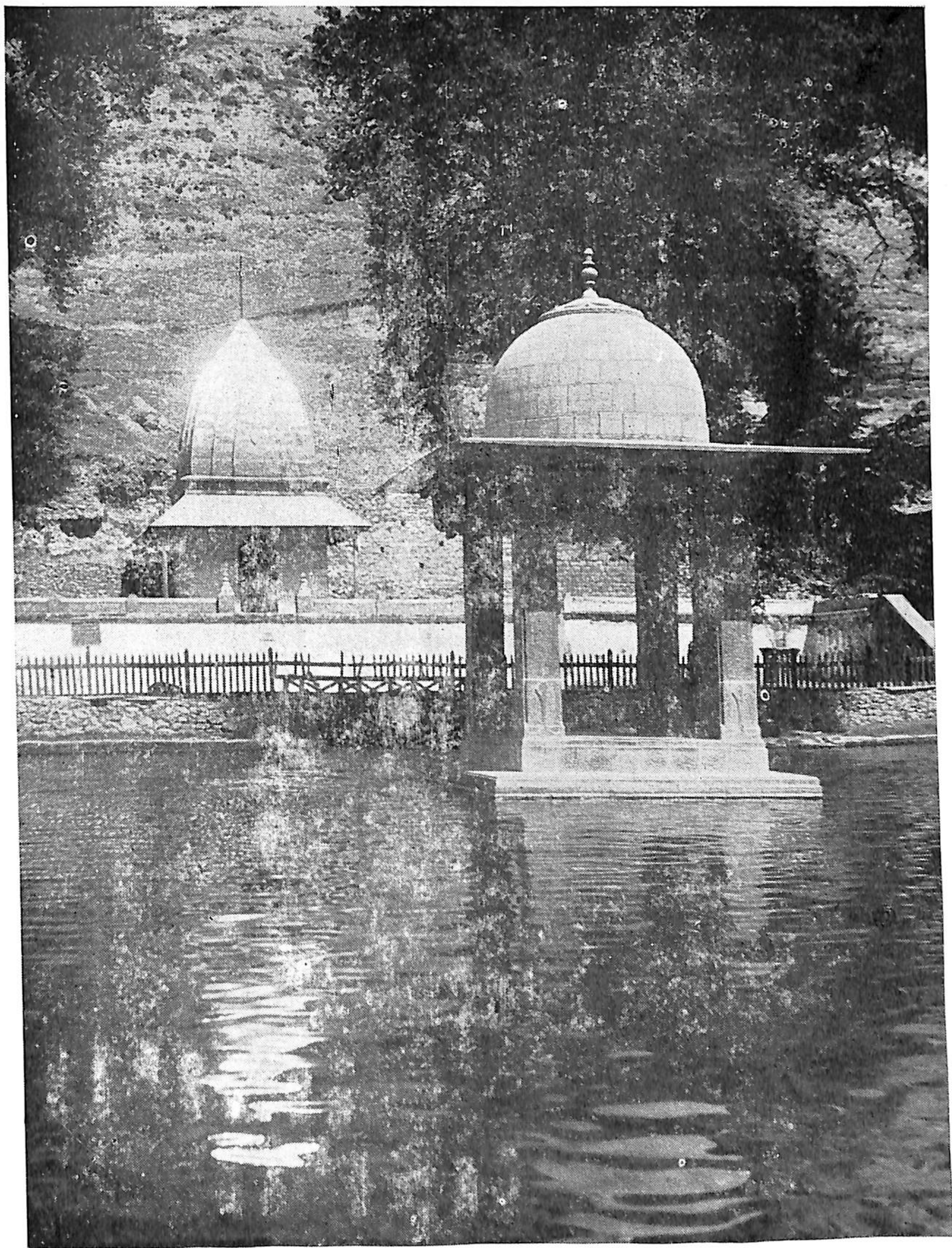
Parmananda's lot being cast in a village, the conditions were less favourable for a liberal education than for rustic simpilcity and health and good nature. He must have learnt such Persian and rudimens of arithmetic as he could at the feet of the village Mulla, and then succeeded to his father's profession as Patwari of Bhavan (Mattan), where he lived to the end of his long life. In a small house in this village a small likeness of the poet and sage painted by one of his d.sciples (Narayan 'Muratgar) is still preserved. From this likeness he appears to have been a large-headed, sharp nosed, thick necked, broad shouldered, white haired, dark complexioned, robust old man of ordinary features, about seventy years of age.

He was married very early in his boyhood to the young daughter of his father's fellow Patwari of the same village. The young woman was a few months older than the boy, and in their play as children she must have lorded it over him. This air of early superiority was visible in later life as absence of strict obedience and of reverent love towards her husband. Malded (that was her name) was feared by all the women of the neighbourhood and often spoke in words which when addressed to a tender-hearted poet and saint, would sound rather harsh. What could this poor uneducated woman know of the greatness of her early playmate and now her husband to make her bow in reverence to him ?

As a Patwari, to which profession he succeeded his father at about twenty-five years of age, he does not seem to have been very smart in the beginning. He complains of the hardships of the profession in a satire in which a revenue officer named *Mishr* Radhu Mal is depicted as a tyrant who 'intends to give Patwaris away in charity at the tirtha of Matan'. It is also said that he was once made to carry a sheep to the ghāt of Khanabal for one of his superior officers, and that the humilitation thus undergone by him found vent in the very popular short poem beginning with......

त्राहि माम त्राहि पाहि मुरारी
कट संकट हे मुकुट–धारी

"Save me, Oh, save me Murari : get me out of the strait,O wearer of the diadem".



Martand Kund

The word कट which here means 'remove', may have been suggested by its ordinary meaning 'sheep'; or the latter meaning may have given rise to the story current about the poem. There is reason to believe also that his wife did not approve of his other-worldliness in the profession and his consequent failure to bring home as much in cash and kind as she might wish.

While performing the duties of this profession as a means of earning the barest livelihood, he seems to have devoted his heart and soul to what his wife might disparagingly call "other worldly" affairs. He must have sat at the feet of some Sanskrit scholars to listen to stories from the Bhagvata and other Puranas; to the broad principles of Vedanta (and Shaiva) philosophy; to the mystical sayings of Lalla and Nund Rishi; and to the description of Sat-chakra upasana or Kundalini Yoga. It is said that his aged family-guru living at Bijbehara, or the guru's son, Pt. Atma Ram were his teachers in these things—after his own father, of course, who had copied the whole of the Mahabharata, as said above. Paramananda himself has left a copy of the 'Upanikhat', that is, the Persian rendering of the Upanishads made under the supervision of Prince Dara Shikoh. He must have read the Mahabharata copied by his father. It is also said that he was a patient listener to the Granth Sahib as recited by a Sikh Sadhu at the Martanda tirtha. He must also have had many opportunities of listening to the philosophical or religious discourses of Parmahansas and other Sadhus—numbers of whom come to this sacred tirtha, from all parts of India, on their way to the famous holy cave of Amarnathji. It must be from these discourses and from recitations from the Granth Sahib that he managed to pick up a smattering of a sort of Punjabi-Hindustani (which he himself calls 'Bhakha'), and in this dialect he afterwards succeeded in clothing some of his delightful short poems. Through the ungrammatical and un-idiomatic expressions of this mixed dialect it is as delightful as it is amusing to guess his meaning and relish the depth of his tender thoughts of divine love and the high flights of his philosophy. It is said that towards the end of his life Parmananda resigned his Patwar but continued to receive its emoluments in even greater abundance, thanks to the loving reverence or admiration of the big Mukkadam (head of village) named Salih Ganai, who had been dazzled by a glimpse into the spiritual glory of Parmananda, his servant and Patwari. For about fifteen years he never went out of his seat of devotion or spiritual contemplation at his home. During this period one Swami Atmanand of Benares, a Sannyasi Parmahamsa, visited him. The two lived closeted together for days and months at Parmanda's house.

One of his neighbours, senior by many years, was Pt. Tika Ram, who was a Sadhu and wrote a good deal in Persian verse on moral, religious and philosophical subjects. He too must have been a gr t influence on the character of this growing sage.

He visited some of the contemporary Muslim Faqirs, amongst whom was one Wahab Sahib who lived somewhere near Khrew. It is said that Parmanand had lately written the poem beginning with.

कर्म-भूमिकायि दिज़ि धर्मुक बल ।
संतोष ब्यालि भवि आनन्द फल ।

'Strengthen the field of action with the loam of righteousness, then sow the seed of contentment, which will yield the harvest of bliss'

This poem had become very popular on account of the spiritual ideas expressed in it in the familiar language of agricultural processes, and had reached the ears of Wahab Sahib. When Paramananda visited the Faqir in the company of his friend and colleague, Dharam Chand Patwari, the Faqir playfully complained that Parmananda had written all his poems in 'Hindu Kashmiri', which was intelligible to Hindus only and nothing for the benefit of his Muslim friends. Upon this Parmananda turned to his companion and dictated on the spot the short poem beginning with—

पांच-त्रे-भागलिस करारदादस
वादस ज्याद न ज़ि कम ॥

'In the contract of division (of produce) in the ratio of five parts to three, the agreement has to be fulfilled exactly—neither more nor less can be accepted!

In this poem Sanskrit words are avoided altogether, while the form of agricultural language is retained. Parmananda is said to have visited Mahmud Gami, the author of Shirin-o-Khusrav and other books in Kashmiri verse, who lived at Duru near Verinaag.

So much about his school education and post-school self education. He did not rest contented with mere learning; he observed, thought, and meditated for himself, and put his philosophy of life into practice. The earliest object of his devotion was Bhavani, the Mother of the Universe, whom he worshipped at the place sacred to Her on the hill adjacent to Matan and called Bharga-Shikha on this account. He has written a short poem in Her honour; it begins—

श्री भर्ग रूपी राज्ञा भवानी ।
लीन कर च दीन अस्य दि चानिये ॥

'Blessed Queen and Mother of Universe in the form of Bharga (Light), help us to merge our (finite) selves into Thy (infinite) Self; for we are The dependents'.

He speaks of Her with profound reverence in the concluding verse of the poem on Amarnath pilgrimage, in which poem yogic and spiritual significance is

ingeniously attached to places and practices usually performed on the way to the famous cave. Says he—

भर्ग-रूप नव दुर्गा च मान ।
स्वर्ग-लोकक्य छि ततिथय नमान ।
इष्टदेवी छे पननी प्रमाण ।।
मन थिर करु पूजुन प्रभू ।।

'Have faith in the Ever-new Durga manifest in the from of light; the dwellers in heaven pay homage to Her; she is our chosen Goddess and her worship is incumbent on us. Make thc mind steady and worship the Lord'.

Another place of solitude for such devotions was the spring sacred to Saraswati (Goddess of wisdom and learning) in Seer, the village in which his ancestors had lived.

While worshipping and meditating at these holy places, he is said to have experienced some visions, which brought him the conviction that the Mother as Saraswati (Goddess of poetry and eloquence) was propitious to him and deigned to speak through him. So in the beginning of the poem just quoted he says—

कन थव सरस्वती छय वनन ।
वत्र-वत्र पान छुयना सनन ।।

'Listen, Sarawati Herself is speaking, art thou not impressed. O my soul, though told so often ?'

It may be interesting to note that his earthly mother was also named Saraswati. In another poem he says : 'Mother Saraswati has been propitious to you, Parmananda'.

Along with the worship of his Ishta-Devi he must have long and laboriously practised what is known by the various names of Pranabhyasa-Yoga, Shat-chakra-upasana, etc. Two of his poems are noticeable in this connection: (I) The poem on the Amarnath pilgrimage, and (2) a short poem inserted into his Sudama Charita and beginning—

पंपोश-वागस-मंज वथरावय ।
भावय पननी गोस त गम ।

'I will make for Thee a seat of honour in the lotus garden and there tell Thee all my troubles and sorrows'.

These are replete with references to 'Lotuses' or chakras or Mandalas; the 'Sun' and the 'Moon'; the Anahata sound; the gradual manifestation of Para (subtlest

virbration) into Vaikhari (audible sound). Elsewhere there are references to Raja Yoga and what he calls Nada-bindu-yoga. But nowhere does he give any information about these 'Lotuses' beyond mentioning them by name or throwing off obscure hints, useless to any but those already initiated to these mysteries. This devotion and these yogic practices he is said to have begun at the age of about forty-five. One night, it is related, he was coming home very late from his devotions at the Saraswati spring at Seer, when near the crematorium of Matan he had the vision of Deva. He was so full of this influence that the first man who looked at him next morning was so affected that from that very day he turned from an ordinary man into a Sadhu, an aspirant after spiritual things.

From the time he "found his tongue" at the feet of the Mother to the end of his life extending over well night a century, he wrote many poems in Kashmiri and Bhakha. No information as to their dates or even their sequence or precedence in time being available, we can only group them according to the degree of their sublimity, which may roughly indicate their probable chronological order also............

At the lowest level we may place the Litanies addressed to Devi, Ganesha, Shiva, Vishnu, etc., in which he humbles himself, confesses his 'sins' and petitions the Deity for mercy and forgiveness. The Sanskrit word for such Litanies is Dinakrandan. Most of his litanies are short poems of four 'Padas' the last of which is a repetition of the refrain (without consideration of its fitting in with the other three). The longest of them is in couplets rhyming together, and contains pathetic biographical touches besides a parable in the form of dispute between the Tree and the Shadow to be decided by the Sun.

In the second group we may place the poem on the pilgrimage to Amarnath cave and perhaps the poem beginning with—

संतोष ब्यालि भवि आनन्द फल......

These are grouped together only on the ground that they contain more references than any other poem to yoga practices and 'Lotuses' and so forth.

The next group may consist of the the three longest poems namely (1) Sudama Charita (2) Radha Swayamwara, and (3) Shiva Lagna. Of these Sudama Charita is placed first (and so in contiguity to the second group), as reference to yoga 'Lotuses' are contained in the short poem inserted into it, as already said above. The themes of these are respectively the mutual love of Sudama and Sri Krishna, that of Radha and other Gopis and Sri Krishna; and the re-union of Siva and Uma. They symbolise the boundless love of God for the human soul, and the love and aspiration of the latter towards God. Here Parmananda is at his best, for he was nothing if not a

lover of the Deity and the divine. Into this 'Lila' or play of the lord, this unfettered flow of love he pours his whole soul, giving free expression to his love of God, whom he loved particularly in the form of Radha-Krishna. It was probably due to these the Parmananda's poems came to be known by the name of Lila which name is now given to all religious and devotional poems in Kashmiri. In common parlance his poetry is also collectively called Chit, which is the first word of his poem of "Radha Swayamwara"—

चित - विमर्श दिप्तिमान भगवानो

It is said that when he recited this Lila in his muscial voice and to the accompaniment of the Madham, which he played constantly and fairly well, every fibre of his heart thrilled—he wept and sang and danced in the acstasy. From internal evidence it appears that Sudama-Charita precedes and Shiva-Lagna follows Radha-Swayamwara. Consider for example—

(राधायि) रुकमन घर छस नोवान ।
सोदामस - जन भगवानो ।।
तिय वनि परमानन्द यिय छु वनान ।
शिव देवियि कासि अभिमानो ।
कथ बड छे सती गत क्या छे करान ।।

"Rukmini takes her (Radha) to her palace as the Lord took Sudama to his; Parmananda will relate (at length) what he is saying (here); Shiva will cure Devi of her pride; it is a long story in which Sati voluntarily leaps into the fire".

The fourth group comprises what may be called didactic poems addressed to aspirants to spiritual life. They lay stress on the Sadhanas or preparations and purifications necessary for attainment of Jnana e. g. control of senses, quietude and concentration; or Vairagya, Viveka and Bhakti. Some portions of these short poems dwelling on the urge to spiritual effort, the decaying nature of the body, the evanescence of life, the mockery of sense-pleasure, the folly of mere book-learning the necessity of surrender to God, are indeed very touching.

The fifth and crowning group consists of Vedantic and philosophical poems—the ripest fruits of his old age and mature wisdom. Therein are stated the Siddhanta or ultimate truths of Vedanta—Aparoksha Darshan, Sahaja-vichar, 'Tat Twam Asi', Anirvachaniya Maya, etc. In these he rises above external exercises and Pranabhyasa—even above the Sadhanas of Shama and Dama, not to speak of Dana, Tirtha-yatra, Homa and Vedic rituals. They read like the meditations of Jivanmukta. Take for example—

यिय छुख त तिय छुख छुख न ब्ययन वुछोनुये ।
अछयन हुन्द गाश पान अछिव वुछुनये ।
नुछुन छु छोनुय वुछवन गछि वुछोनुये ।।

सहज़स प्राव पछे ।
    शम त दम नाव गछे ।।
पान-रोस्त पान स्वरुन ।
    सहज्-विचार करुन ।।"
"खारित प्राण तय चरिथ रगनय
    शम-दम नाशि-मा यि वाव वर्ज़ीन ।
शांति-सत्य प्राव प्रोवुम होम-जग नय ।
    लग नय तथ्य-कुन क्या अर्ज़ीन ।।"
"परमात्मा उत्तम तत् त्वम् असि ।
    उलसे न त अद लसे न कुंह ।।"
"अपजय मपजय छे वजय मानञ
    अज्ञन त तज्ञन मा नञ गये ।।"
"छुन पत फेरन-रोस्त वनहान केंछा जय-मनस ।
    टोठ तस-विन केंह न जानुन गव जि टोठच दय मनस ।
अन-अपेक्षुत प्रावनाव्यम पुर्ण-आनन्दमय मनस ।।"

"You are what you are (undefinable in any other terms) imperceptible to any but your own self; that which makes the eyes see is not visible to the eyes. There is not much in seeing the objects of sight; the great thing is to see the seer",

"In the realization of the self, the so called 'control' of the mind and the senses is not of much avail; the self is to be attained by conviction of faith. The true self is to be contemplated, the selfless Self to be meditated upon"

"This terrible storm of distress can not be allayed by Shama or Dama, by raising of the breath-energy to the head and straining the vessels and nerves. What one can not achieve by Homa or Yajna rituals can be attained by quietude only; if to this one does not apply oneself heart and soul, nothing is gained".

"Unless, the highest, holiest self sung in the great Vedic thought; 'Thou Art that' is realized, no one can escape death."

"Though only imaginery and supposed, Maya has to be taken for real by the unwise; to the wise she never reveals herself (or, neither the ignorant nor the wise have been able to understand her)."

"There is no victory for the mind except in retreat. Desirelessness done can make one fully happy and blissful, God's grace to the soul means nothing but that the soul holds nothing dear but God".

Unfortunately the poems of the last group are not popular—they could not be. It is very seldom that one comes across a copy of one of them, or hears them recited or sung as the others are. Hence it is extremely difficult to guess the correct reading from the few and rare and not easily available manuscripts written in the

short-handish Persian script without the least attempt at phoenetic or regular, or even clear spelling. In the case of other poems, which are popular and may be heard recited or sung now and then, this difficulty is to great extent reduced.

One important peculiarity of Parmananda's poems, especially the Lila poems, is that while describing the outer play he never loses sight of its inner significance and frequently reminds the reader of it. Either by a direct statement or by indirectly throwing in some significant words, he takes us from the concrete and the real to the abstract and the ideal. Consider for example—

गोकल हृदय म्योन तत्य चोन गूर्य–वान ।
व्रच् म्यानि गूपियि च्यय पत लारान ।।

By Gokal is meant the human soul......man's thoughts are the Gopis that aspire after the Lord.

व्रति ओर संकल्प गोपी गवाला ।
बछ् गप्यां वासना रक्षपाला ।
खेल–में फैल पयो नंद–लाला ।।

"Thought currents and cognitions are the Gopas or cowherds, desire-impressions are the calves and cows; their protector, the joy of Nanda, has spread Himself everywhere in play".

सुदाम जीव ओस यार भगवानस ।।
ओर द्राव भगवान सुदर्शनय ।
योर सुदाम जीव गोस अर्पनणय ।।

"Sudama, the Jiva, was friend of the Lord..... the Lord came forward to receive him, and Sudama, the Jiva, gave his limited self up to Him".

गुफि–मंज गुफि वात पनञे ।
त्राव दीवियि त देवता अन्ये ।।

"While in the cave (of Amarnath) do thou enter the cave of thy own heart, let the outer Gods and Goddesses go",

कृष्णस–रुस्त तति कुंह छुन आसान ।
कुंह छुन युस न सुय आसानो ।।

"There is no one there but Krishna, or rather there is no one who is not He"

मे–रुस्त सुति छुन रोज़ानो ।।

"The Lord too can never manifest except with me (the soul)".

On the form side the poet delights in the use of homonyms or words similar in form but different in meaning. Numerous examples of this will be noticed by the reader in the course of his study of the poems. Two examples will suffice here for illustration :-

पोश्तस देवकियि लूक आऽस्य यिवान ।
पोश तस पूजि् आऽस्य· लागानो ।
पोशतस जि् कृष्ण उपकारक सन्तान ।।

"People came to congratulate Devki; they worshipped her with flowers, and said' 'May you live long to bless her. O Krishna, dutiful son."

कन्यकन न केंह् ऋण धर्म-दान ।
कञि-कनि तिम पहार पूज़ह़ान ।
घर त्रऽविमत्य कञि कन-सान ।।

" The girls owe no debts to religion, such as good deeds and gifts; in place of a stone idol they worship the hills (touched by the Lord's feet); they have renounced their house and homes—stones foundation and all".

Like most writers of Kashmiri verse, Parmananda likes to use many initial or internal rhymes in addition to the usual end-rhymes. Take for example—

खाम दुसि क्या जि् याम ताम पेयि थूसे ।
बाम क्युथ खसि तत बसे न कांह् ।
थुसि थुसि सारनस मो लग थुसे ।
असे उलसे न लसे न कांह् ।।

The rhymes are :-

खाम, याम, ताम, बाम । दुसे, थूसे, खसे, बसे, घुसे, असे, उलसे, लसे ।।

"What reliance can be placed on a mud wall ? It may fall with a splash at any moment. How can it bear ornamental roofing ? (or, how can roofing it be worth while ?) no one has to inhabit it long. Don't worry yourself collecting handfulls of mud for its construction. The true life is "Thou Art That"; unless it is realised, there is no escape from death".

Then sometimes he uses such difficult rhymes that one wonders how he has been able to find so many of them. For example- लग-नय 'if I don't apply myself' लग्नय 'constellation in which the sun is at birth', गगनय 'in the sky', तगनय yet to learn', नग्नय 'naked', मग्नय 'submerged', सगनय 'unwatered', जग-नय 'if not by sacrifice', and so forth.

Puns or plays on words are not now appreciated, much less many jingling rhymes—they are considered even distasteful when they occur too frequently. But when we bear in mind that Parmananda was born in a village of an isolated country like the Kashmir of his time, and that his education consisted of a little Persian (from which alone he could take his models), the wonder is not that we miss polished expressions, apt similes, fine metaphors, and vivid descriptions of a Sanskrit or Hindi poet, but that this rustic Patwari of such poor education could rise to such heights of philosophy or reach such depths of love. He never travelled beyond a few miles of his own country, and he lived when and where teachers and books and newspapers were unknown. What might we not expect from this great soul and fine intellect if only he had been born in better circumstances?

He revers the memory of his parents; his father, Krishna Pandit, he calls his spiritual teacher, besides father and, delights in the coincidence that he bore the same name as Shri Krishna, his all. In one place he says—

सन–गुरं त बब म्मोन श्री कृष्ण दीव ।
त्रैलोकी छे देह त सु छुस दीव ॥

"Glorious Shri Krishna is my spiritual teacher and father; the three worlds are the body of which He is the soul".

In another, he playfully addresses Shri Krishna saying—

बाप हमारा कृष्ण हुआ तो पिता तुम्हारा नंद ।
आपस में क्या पहुंचोगा हम आप करो दरदाम ॥

"Thou art my father, being named Krishna; but Thy father is Nanda (which is my name). What is our mutual relation then? This Thou alone canst calculate".

Two sons were born to him, but neither lived in his old age; the elder died after marriage and the younger as a boy. The lack of this earthly blessing he seems to have keenly felt. There are references to this in his own poems which amount to complaints and bring tears to the eyes of the reader, though he himself philosophises saying that a son might after all not prove a blessing at all—

कुन त कीवल त सार सूरमच आश ।
न्यपोथर त न्यतरन न रूदमुत गाश ॥

"I am alone forlorn, with all my hopes dwindled to despair, sonless and with eyes that have lost the power of sight".

परमानन्द छुय च्य अर्मान सन्तान ।
सन्तान ओसुय सोन–तानो ।
हा च्य सन्तान मा आसिहिय मारान ॥

"Parmananda, you feel the anguish of being without a son; you had one whom you regarded as a quantity of gold, an ormament; but why don't you think ? The son might possibly bring about your death."

He had two daughters, one of whom was married in the neighbouring village of Tur. Her son Mana Pandit, was adopted by Parmananda; but he does not seem to have inherited the qualities of a poet or intelligence required for the appreciation and enjoyment of his grandfather's poetry. The descendants of this adopted son are still living in the ancestral house (rebuilt). The other daughter was married to one Pand t Gopal Razdan who came to live in Parmananda's house.

Parmananda was, however, fortunate in finding several disciples. The most notable among them is Pt. Lakshman Ji of Nagam, who was devoted to him and ably assimilated his master's thought and imitated his style. A reader who does not happen to know that a certain portion of 'Radha Swayamwara' is really the composition of this disciple, very little altered by Parmananda, will not easily believe this when told so. It is related that when the master was writing 'Radha Swayamwara', the disciple came to him and asked for permission to read out the 'Mohini' episode privately written by him. When he had done reading, Parmananda remarked, "You have spiced my 'sag' with saffron", and without changing a word, incorporated this episode in the main poem. Lakshman Ji has written several short poems as parallels to the originals of his master. Probably before coming under the influence of Parmananda, Lakshman Ji was already the author of a long poem in Kashmiri entitled Nala-Damayanti. It is in couplets interspersed with songs. Some of his Ghazals in Kashmiri are very beautiful in their directness and simplicity and excel a good many of the more elaborate Urdu Ghazals in pathos. He is not anything so p ofound as Parmananda, but his language is much clearer, being less mystic and less archaic...inspite of the fact that both were partly contemporaries. He looked forward to modern Kashmiri for words and expressions, for which Parmananda had looked back to a much older dialect. Another disciple was Pt. Lachhi Ram Mulasi. He has also tried to express his masters's thoughts in verses of his own making. A third, Pt. Sahaj Ram, was gifted with a musical voice and was therefore much in evidence in the Bhajan meetings, in which he sang the master's poems with great devotion and enthusiasm and even excitement. Kasha Kak was a vaidya, fairly familiar with some herbs and essences in addition to 'Svara Jnana' or secrets of 'right' and 'left' breathing and Prana currents. His brother Narayana 'Muratgar', was a painter and a healer of fractures and sprains. The likeness of Parmananda painted by him is preserved at Mattan. Pt. Dharam Chand was Parmananda's friend and fellow Patwari. Last but not the least was Salih Ganai, the Mukadam-Zamindar who looked to all the needs of Parmananda himself as his servant, though he was outwardly his master. His parents, his brothers (Thakur and Sahaj Pandit) and his

sons (Vasa Ram and Mahanand Pandit) having predeceased him, he might well feel alone and forlorn with his sharp-tongued wife and not very smart adopted son and with weakened eyesight and advancing decrepitude. Hear him mourn his lot and complain to his God, Shri Krishna, in these most pathetic words :—

"My father and mother, the supporters of my life, remained a short while and were then gone. After them I depended on my brothers and relatives, but they too proved unreal and mortal. Then I had my sons; but time, the thief, took them too away. Now I am alone and forlorn, with all hopes shattered. Sonless and blinded. I am now Thy blind man, Surdas, and have Thee alone to lead me by the hand."

But providence made amends for these losses, to some extent, by giving him such and so many devoted disciples and friends and admirers. Among the last was Nidan Kak Ji, the famous saint of Bijbehara. He had heard of Parmananda as a singer and summoned him to give performance before him and company. When sleep had overpowered the rest towards the end of the night, Nidan Kak Ji was still listening with rapt attention to Parmananda's ecstatic singing. Suddenly he too nodded for a moment and saw Shri Krishna and Radha smiling, held in either arm of the rustic 'singer'. He awoke and bowed to Parmananda. Thenceforward the two loved and revered each other. Kak Ji would walk all the way to Mattan with a rice-cake for an offering of love to Parmananda, and the latter would distribute bits of it to all his people as priceless spiritual gifts.

A few days before his last, in 1879, Parmananda had a fever but kept siting in his Asana as usual. On the last day he admonished all his disciples not to go away from him. Still seated in Siddhasana he breathed his last 'Om', and the disciples fell something burst through the skull and fly away in peaceful glory. That was the end.

As regards his personal habits, it is interesting to note that he was a Vaishnava and abstained from flesh foods. One day when his wife would not serve his food because somebody dad died in the village and it was a sin to eat while the corpse lay uncremated, he pointed sarcastically to her basket of dried fish and said : "What about these corpuses ? How did you dare to eat all the days these have been in your house ?" He dressed well and had very fine tastes in food. The rice that was cooked for him was of the finest available quality and was lovingly supplied by Salih Ganai. He sang well and played the Madham with a practised hand. His handwriting was very fine; a specimen of it is preserved in the 'Upanikhat' by Dara Shikoh which he copied with his own hand. He had a ready wit. The writer's father used to relate that once when he had the honour of sitiing at Parmananda's

feet, a Zamindar put in an appearance. He and his fellows had been hatching up an intrigue, of which Parmananda happened to have heard. Being asked how they 'were progressing' the Zamindar said—

'महाराज दला–दला छिस दिवान'

(the matter is under discussion). Upon this Parmananda remarked, "ओ यि छे दलनय हुज का'म" which means (1) that such matters have to be well discussed; and also (2) that only rascals could do such things.

In conclusion let us have a look into the mind that Parmananda brought with him and developed through his long life. At the Maktab of the village he went through the ordinary course of reading, which then consisted of a few easy books in Persian, like the Bostan and Gulistan of Saadi, and rudiments of letter-writing and arithmetic. Yet from this he picked up enough to understand the ordinary technique of poetry and write Ghazals and other kinds of verse not only in Persian but also in Kashmiri, over the pen name of Garib. Unfortunately all his work in Persian and Persianised Kashmiri (done before he took to writing on religious and philosophical subjects in Sanskritised Kashmiri) is now lost. Only a few verses are here and there orally recited from memory.

When he took to devotion and yogic practices, he succeeded very well as we have seen, but did not fall into the mistake of taking means for ends, forsaking the world for so-called other-worldliness, or of neglecting household and social duties in the pursuit of a half sane ascetism. When he listened to Puranic stories, his mind passed over the symbols to the realities symbolized. The Lila of Shri Krishna and Gopis suggests to him the aspiration of the human soul towards God and Divinity, and the love and attraction of the latter for the former. Gokul becomes the human mind and the cow-boys and girls, the cows and calves become the thoughts, desires, impressions and beliefs of the mind, which all follow the flute or God's love-call. In his hands, too, the stages of pilgrimage to Amarnath assume the meaning of the ascent of the Yogi from Chakra to Chakara and his final entrance into the 'thousand-petalled lotus'. The ice block idol becomes the solidarity of being—consciousness—bliss. The whole process of paddy growing turns into the whole Sadhana incumbent on the aspirant, from the sowing of the seeds of contentment to the reaping of the harvest of bliss. The simple fact that the shadow of a tree is always in the direction opposite to that in which the sun is shining supplies material for a very fine sermon on the surrender of personality to the Universal Self necessary for the illumination that must precede a glimpse into the mystery of the Absolute.

Again he does uot halt at the rituals of religion, nor at the Yogic siddhis, nor yet sadhanas, but rises beyond them to the truth underlying them all. to the

freedom of the real knowledge' of which the Gita says: 'In the world there is nothing so puriying as knowledge'. His ability to produce a song or dictate a poem extempore at the wish of a friend, his choice or invention of metres suited to Kashmiri, his puns and plays, and his ready wit, though great faculties in themselves, are nothing compared with his grasp of truth and ability to manipulate every subject so as to lead to great heights of philosophy and depths of love and devotion. And it is these that far more certainly Point to the mind of a genius. Similarly, Sudama becomes the Jiva, and Krishan the Lord, and the story becomes the description of their pristine unity, their separation cause by the Jiva's desired for individual existence ('Paradise lost') the sorrow and suffering of individual life, the awakening brought about by these through the Jiva's helpmate-spouse, Buddhi, the return to God ('Paradise regained') by surrender of the ego to the divine will, and the peace and contentment of a life brought 'in tune with the Infinite'. This is genius.

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Pilgrimage To The Shrine Of Amarnath

by Mrs. Jean Pohli

Man's search for God has continued since the beginning of time. In India, this quest frequently takes the form of a physical pilgrimage to the Tirtha, or Holy place. Individuals may go to remote secluded spots in search of solace, and a special 'tonic' of spiritual renewal and strength. Again, thousands of pilgrims may travel hundreds of miles facing arduous obstacles-minimal food and shelter, exhausting climbs to almost inaccessible heights—to reach a goal. Perhaps this will be the birth-place of a great Saint, perhaps a cherished relic, perhaps a Tirtha where strong vibrations of sacredness emanate in waves to inspire and uplift the seeker.

An indomitable, secure, fearless faith seems to surround such pilgrims and firmly hold and guide them unwaveringly towards tho goal, despite the hundreds of hazards and hurdles in the way. These latter are very real. High altitudes with their rarefied atmosphere require faster and faster breathing and heart-rates; the racing and at times irregular pulse may defy correct tabulation. Unpredictable weather, especially in the Himalayas, may suddenly without warning drop the temperature precipitously. A brilliantly warm, sunny day can yield abruptly to a vicious, blinding sleeting rain or freezing snow-storm. The possibility of illness hovers menacingly along the way with no medical care available. Physical exhaustion naturally will assail foot-weary or saddlesore pilgrims who only see endless miles of travel ahead of them before any possible sight of their projected goal.

Yet this apparent inaccessiblity of the goal, and all the hazards intervening seem only to spur the pilgrim onwards, so that his soul may soar to an elavation, beyond the awesome grandeur of the Tirtha: the obstacles in his path seem only to become tests of his derermination. Such a goal—with such a path is Amarnath Cave, the holy abode of Lord Siva, the Lord of Immortality, high in the interior of the Kashmir Himalayas.

The Amarnath Yatra (pilgrimage, lit., Journey) has been a lifetime dream of multitudes of deeply spiritual people for centuries. At least two reasons for this may be seen: it seems to epitomize the extreme difficulties lying in the pathway of spiritual aspirants; yet like them, the pilgrim knows that the goal is accessible despite all impediments, because others have reached it and returned unscathed—full of the

tidings that one can and must reach his Goal through faith, ardour, and persistent effort.

This pilgrimage takes place annually, and generally in the month of August. For years the Government has been giving official help to the thousands of pilgrims visiting the shrine at the auspicious time of the full moon of Sravan (the month usually coinciding with August). Under this sponsorship, proper medical and other care is available, but usually not to smaller groups proceeding at other times on their own initiative. Such was our group of eight, travelling unaccompanied almost two weeks before the full-moon day (Purnima). We were, however, blessed with sunshine, particularly intense in this rarefied air, and escaped the drenching rains and high winds which followed the thousands who started a few days after our return.

One morning at 4.30 with mounting anticipation and suppressed excitement, we began our two hour car journey from Srinagar to Phalgam, 'the village of the shepherds'. Through the Pahalgam valley flow two rivers, and tall pine trees cover the gentle slopes. Slowly our eyes lifted to the distant white glaciers waiting silently thousands of feet above.

The bumpy road from Pahalgam to Chundanwari is now motorable by jeep or by car, but previously was negotiable only on foot or by pony. Thick groves of pines covered the hills, and the Lidar River roared below as we bounced along this pebbled road towards Chandanwari where all vehicles would have to be left behind. This was a 2,000 foot ascent from Pahalgam: and on arrival at Chandanwari we were shown a map outlining the entire area and showing us our forthcoming journey in linear detail.

Pack horses were here available to carry gear of all sorts, ranging from food supplies, bedding and extra clothing and tents to umbrellas and camera equipment. Those pilgrims hardly enough to climb by foot, might carry a few necessary items in a back-pack, but most also required ponies to supply their tents and other needs in campgrounds along the way. Groups of pilgrims were moving in slow determination upwards from Chandanwari: and on many a face was seen a look of expectancy and anticipation which could well strike a spark of infectious joy in the heart of other pilgrims.

For pilgrims travelling on foot, many overnight campgrounds with pitched tents were necessary, as distance across such terrain are relatively great. During the peak season of the pilgrims, several thousand people would encamp thus, rapidly creating small canvas villages, then before dawn leaving the area just as rapidly, with hardly a trace of their night's halt remaining.

From Chandanwari at the outset one must cross a natural ice bridge under which a fast - racing stream cascaded down hill. Slowly, carefully the sure-footed ponies

picked their way over slippery rocks, small rivulets, around narrow slanted path ways, balancing themselves precariously near the edges of nothingness. one must conquer the uphill lunge of the horse, sitting high on his shoulders, before having suddenly to reverse the maneuver as a downward descent begins.

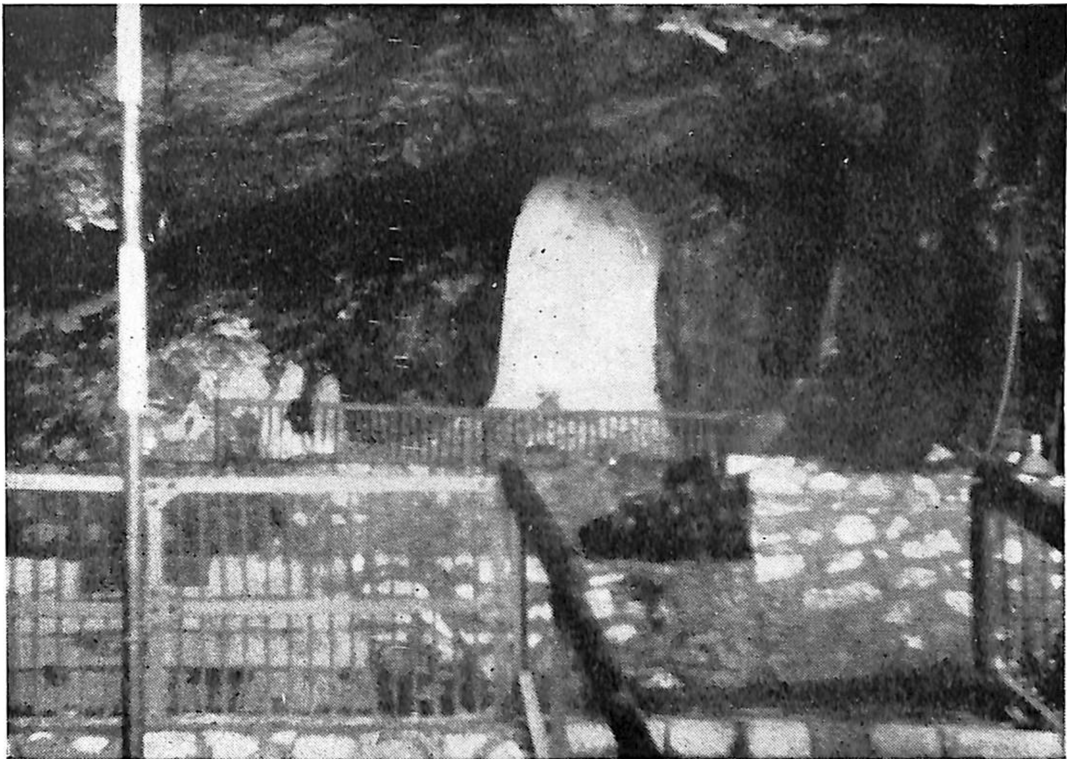
The ascent was gradual and slow, but the ponies could make only approximately two miles an hour, as each hoof had to be located firmly before the next step was ventured. This gave the pilgrim rider ample opportunity to observe and absorb the magnificient beauties of the Himalayas, with the foreground of densely forested hill-sides, trusting his safety necessarily to his fourlegged friend.

Less than a mile from Chandanwari began a steep climb towards Pishu Ghati, one of the most difficult parts of the journey. But in what exhilaration of accomplishment one delights after each precarious ascent is conquered. From elavation of 9,500 feet at Chandawari to the highest point of 14,500 at Mahagunus, wide panoramas often spread before the eyes of the pilgrims. The Himalayas in their vastness fill one with wonder and a humble respect for the Creator of the geological master piece. Jagged, rugged stark ridges were in contrast to the soaring grandeur of the snow-crested peaks, towering 20,000 and more feet h gh, seemingly touching the vivid blue of the cloudless ocean of the sky. Again, periodically the sky would become dotted with puffy wisps of milk-white clouds. And any time, a cloudburst might come unexpectedly drenching in its ferocity, only to cease as suddenly as it began, having brought a stiff, rapidly drying breeze.

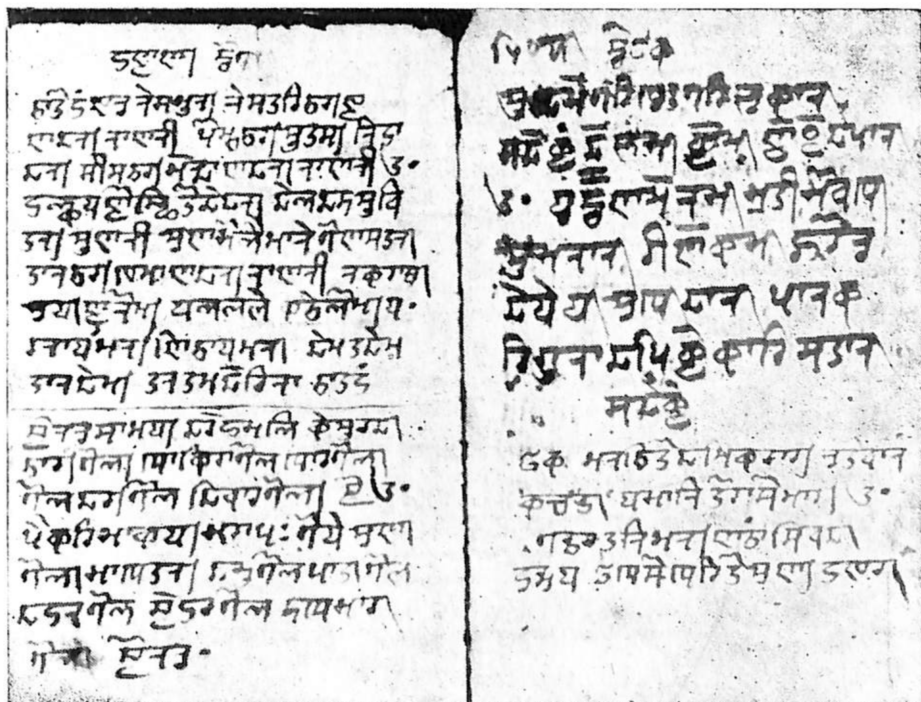
From Pishu Ghati top to Sheshnag Lake, the going was relatively easy. In the distance could be seen the surprisingly vivid turquoise green of Sheshnag lake at 11,730 feet elavation, reflecting the ice peaks in its placid mirror-surface. Two small glaciers feed this lake and some pilgrims occasionally report seeing the fabled divine Serpent of Vishnu (Shesha) streaking through the calm waters. At sundown, the lake reflects the snow on the mountain peaks turned pink by the setting sun—a breathtaking sight!

But gradually the stately pines below Sheshnag were left behind, and the climb above the tree-line brought, a different kind of silence, which penetrated deeply, creating an all pervading calm The treeless mountains in their barren beauty, have yet cradled in their laps acres of meadows filled at this seasons with a profusion of coloured wild flowers. Soft pinks, blues and lavenders, intermingled with purple violets and lemon-yellow buttercups, give softness and warmth to the otherwise desolate surroundings. The silence seemed to captivate the pilgrims, inculcating a rare 'in-depth' feeling as they climbed nearer and nearer to their goal.

The mountain pass of Mahagnus-meaning 'Great Serpent' in Kashmiri-was really like a serpent as it wounds its way upward to 15,500 feet. The Government had at



Sri Amar Nath Ji



Facsimile of a MSS page in Sarda Script

intervals placed signs of encouragement to the weary struggling pilgrim, reading, 'Relax, you're almost there!' A rest was required at the top plateau, as breathing had become extremely laboured and one needed to slowly absorb the pervasive strength which seemed to emanate from the beauty of the exquisite surroundings.

The slow, four mile descent from Mahagunus to Panchtarni was slippery and wet from a sudden, short but heavy rain squall. The rest house, a welcome sight in the distance towards the end of the long fourteen hour day, seemed to our exhausted group of eight, even farther away than it was, Panchatarani is the 'Place of Five Streams', in each of which the more zealous pilgrims would take a dip, passing from one stream to another in wet clothes despite the intense cold. Our small group did not observe this age-old rite but went immediately and wearily toward our shelter for the night.

Here we gathered together all the experiences, too numerous to isolate ourminds, that had taken us step by step from a long-cherished desire for making pilgrimage to Amarnath, to the actual realization that tomorrow, with Siva's grace, this dream would become a living reality.

But the sharp cold soon filtered into the rest house and hurried us into the warmth of our sleeping bags after a steaming cup of hot choclate had begun to alleviate the shivers. Dense darkness settled over the house and the indescribable quiet of the Himalayas pulled the blanket of night around the exhausted travellers. Thoughts of the morrow drifted through our minds before we fell at last into deep sleep. Intense anticipation and longing to touch the feet of Lord Siva dominated my thinking, as images of the Great White God floated dreamily by. Would Siva be visible to us, as He was to Swami Vivekananda? Swamiji "entered the cave and came face to face there with the Lord Himself". Visualizing the so powerful thoughts was hardly conducive to sleep or even dream! But the physical exhaustion conquered all, and seemingly in a matter of minutes, night became the dawning of the day of days.

The early-morning riser had to look thousands of feet above him to glimpse the sun slowly beginning to spread its feeble rays over the top crests of the peaks. Shivering partly from the icy chill still lingering from the night, and partly from anticipation of the day to come, the early one returned expectantly to the other awakening pilgrims. A meditative, spiritual mood seemed to permeate our group as we prepared for the climax of our pilgrimage.

The last four miles from Panchtarni to Amarnath Cave, appeared to have been created as especially arduous, for a final test to the pilgrim's determination. A particularly steep incline covered with large slippery stones, caused horses to step

gingerly so as not to stumble, and the rider consciously had to keep on especially firm rein control on his pony. This narrow winding upward path came to a crest, and immediately began to steep downwards descent, equally precarious. But the anticipation of the cherished goal almost within reach seemed to banish all concern, as if to prove that one's little share of tranquility was somehow deserved. The previous night's thoughts seem to become more real. A magnetic, enveloping feeling of timelessness seemed to grip the pilgrim and the barronness of the surroundings only added to the current of expectancy as one drew nearer to this Siva of the Eternal Himalayas.

Suddenly these thoughts were merged into the reality as, there in the distance, nestling in an austere grey-white rock, was the opening to the mysterious Cave of Amarnath. Through a Snowy gorge, over one last glacier and past a fast running stream of icy water where some pilgrims bathe inspite of the unbearable cold—and then, there it was, barely a hundred yards up a series of terraced, stone steps !

As one climbs the man-made stairs to the cave, breathing becomes difficult at 13,500 feet elavation, slowing the final steps of the pilgrim—as though purposely arranged so that he could savour the mounting feeling of reverence as the goal came within reach. If he were lucky he might glimpse the flight of the two doves, from crevice to crevice in the rock outside the cave, symbolizing Siva and Parvati and considered most auspicious.

Shoes and socks were removed to enter the sacred precincts of the cave before approaching the natural Emblem of Siva. Icy water dripping from the ceiling of the cave brought to our icicle-cold feet a warming numbness. But this numbing of the body only heightened the keen awareness that our pilgrim quest had come to an end.

Nature had carved out of solid rock this abode of Siva, approximately 200 feet high, 200 feet wide, and 100 feet in depth. And on the right side of the cave, secure in a natural niche, stood a shining, pure white ice pillar, over seven feet high and about four in thickness. Snow pigeons fluttered in and out of the cave occassionally. Surrounding the Linga (Emblem of Siva) was a railing, and to the left was a place where pilgrims fasten pieces of cloth, pictures of themselves, or notes conveying a wish that might hopefully be fulfiilled—even to the boon of immortality.

Since there were so few in our group, we were permitted to stand within touching distance of Great White God. I was unprepared for such overpowering magnetism and potency as it emanated. Time seemed to stand still, and the goal of the human yearning for immortality to be within one's very grasp. The soul seemed to find peace and for a moment to become one with the Supreme.

Thus Darshan was moving and meaninful. Holy chanting in Sanskrit by a Hindu Pandit and a Mohammedan priest echoed throughout the cave, after which

a Rakhi of red and yellow thread was tied around each pilgrim's left wrist. Rock candy, raisins and cash were part of our offering to the Lord, and during the chants the pilgrims gently tossed flower petals and Bel leaves to the Lord. Everyone left finally with enough prasad (offered food)- consisting of sugar candy, dry almonds, pieces of dried coconut, and raisins—to take home to family and friends. Outside the Cave there were no booths, no venders selling wares, icons, Pictures or incense: nor any other distractions for the pilgrims, after Darshan, from the home of the Lord of peace, into the warmth of the brilliant sun, one clutched closely the reverent, fulfilling feelings that had absorbed, sobered, and permeated the pilgrim drawing him deep into spiritual thought, continuing throughout his return journey from Amarnath.

One can never be quite the same again after entering the Himalays, completing the strenuous pilgrimage to Amarnath, and actually touching the Lord of Immortality. The joyous pilgrim descended from the mountain-shrine, carrying with him a spiritual exaltation, knowing he had experienced a momentary lifting of the veil which gave a glimpse into Reality.

Swami Premananda has quoted Sri Ramakrishna as saying; "He who has no God within will not find him in a holy city. He who has the Lord in his heart will find him there. Men bring sanctity with them to a place and make it holy. It is men's purity that makes a place of pilgrimage, otherwise how can a place purify a man?" This search to find God takes a variety of forms in the spiritual aspirant's struggle, one of which is certainly pilgrimage to holy places. Thus the multitudes of pilgrims with Him in their hearts have over the centuries sanctified these Tirthas; and those who believe that visiting such a place will make them holy, have already ignited in themselves the spark that will gradally become an all-consuming fire of divine yearning, opening the door to God-realization.

"The supreme ideal of human life is to know God..." says Swami Brahmananda "He shine forth always and everywhere. He dwells within you. He dwells within all creatures, and in the plants and herbs as well......The one supreme Spirit pervades everything. Make Him your ideal, Him and Him alone". This summation could be the motto of each pilgrim as he steadfastly moves towards Truth. Coming in touch with Immortality, if only for an instant, can be an overwhelming and uplifting experience, and lead to realization that in reality man is one with God.

[*Courtesy—Prabudha Bharata*
March, 1976.]

ETHNIC ELEMENTS IN ANCIENT KASHMIR

By Dr. Samvit Kaul

The State of Jammu and Kashmir comprises of three cultural regions, namely, Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. While Jammu region in many respects, including geographical and cultural, is contiguous with the adjacent areas of Himachal and Punjab, Ladakh has strong cultural affinities with geographically adjacent Lahul and Spiti (Himachal) and Tibet. The Valley of Kashmir, surrounded by high mountains, has a geographical, racial and cultural character which is distinct from the other two regions.

Kashmir has a long history. In the remotest past, early man occupied the cave overlooking what was then a vast lake (the legendary *Sati-sar)*, during Middle Pleistocene around 5,00,000 years before present. Early man at that time manufactured tools out of stones, the evidences of which have been recovered from the banks of Liddar Valley at Pahalgam and other nearby places. This is one of the earliest indications of the presence of man in the subcontinent. Subsequently, the most fascinating aspects of Kashmir's earliest history came to light from the excavations carried out in the Neolithic sites of Burzahom, Gufakral and Martand situated on the Karewa terraces. On the present evidence, the Neolithic man in Kashmir lived, around 2,000 B. C., in large and small, square or rectangular and round or oval houses (pits) cut out into the Karewa silt terraces. Though depending for his subsistence mainly on the chase of game and on fishing, he was not a nomad, indications are that a very primitive kind of agricultural and horticultural practices were pursued.

From this remotest past up to the days of Ashoka, no concrete evidences are available about the people who occupied Kashmir. The local ancient Sanskrit text, the *Nilmat - purana* which deals with sacred places, rituals and ceremonies of Kashmir, incidentally also contains details about the origin of Kashmir, its original inhabitants and their gradual displacement by others. Many these details receive corroboration from the linguistc analysis of various languages of Kashmir and adjoining areas. According to *Nilmat-purana,* Kashmir was originally inhabited by the *Nagas*. They were perhaps the ancient people of Hunzanagar, the speakers of Burushaski language. *Nagas,*

according to *Nilmat-purana*, were followed by *Pishachas*, who may be the Aryan invaders, the speakers of Pishachi or Dardic languages. Subsequently, Kashmir was inhabited by the people from Indian plains who entered the valley in a comparatively later period. The composition of *Nilmat-purana* attributed to these Sanskrit speaking people.

Coming to the archaeological and historical evidences, it becomes clear that from very early times the people of Kashmir ethnically did not form a single homogeneous group. There had been varying amounts of admixture of different races and communities. It is, however, certain that the Indo-Afghans or Nordics were the predominating race in the ancient population of Kashmir. These people, who came from Gilgit, are identical, with the ancestors of the Dard speaking tribes, the *Pishachas* of the Sanskrit literature. The general population of Kashmir is thought to have descended from them. In the subsequent period, such infiltrations and incursions into Kashmir continued from the northwest. Of these, the Indo-Greek invasion in the early part of the second century B. C. was more or less only a military incursion which, it seems, hardly affected the ethnic character of the population. These, *Yavannas*, were followed, in the middle of the second century B. C., by the *Shakas* or Scythians. The *Shakas* seem to have had a more intimate relation with Kashmir. They were round and low headed, with straight nose and projecting chin. Though essentially belonging to the Proto-Nordic steppe folk they were undoubtedly a mixed people when they enered the valley. The *Battis* are generally considered to be the descendents of the *Shakas*.

The *Shakas* were followed by the *Kushanas*, a branch the Yue-chi stock of Turki descent. They appear to have been very broad headed with elongated oval face, broad cheek bones, straight nose, dark Mongolian eyes, thick lips, yellowish white to coppery brown complexion, medium stature and dark hair, much on face. A large number of these Yue-chi is thought to have come and settled in Kashmir during the reign of *Kushanas*. After the fall of *Kushanas*, other yue-chi dynasties held sway over various parts.

The next recorded infiltration is that of the *Hunas* in the sixth century A. D. They were a mixed Turki and Tungus people, with prominent cheek bones, broad flat face, dark eyes with Mongolian characteristics; black hair, very little on the body, complexion varying from yellowish to yellowish-brown and medium stature. The racial admixture following incursion of these Central Asian tribes possibly was of a profound nature. A number of sculptures recovered from a site near Harwan on the outskirts of Srinagar show unmistakably figures with characteristic Central Asian racial features.

The last foreign tribe from the northwest which might have settled in Kashmir in the pre-Muhammaden days was perhaps the *Gurjara*. The *Gurjaras* are generally

considered to belong to the *Huna* stock, but no definite testimony for such an affiliation is available at present. Even though no evidence about the early settlement of *Gurjaras* in Kashmir is forthcoming, their occupation of northern Punjab, however, is strongly indicated. They may have migrated into Kashmir from north Punjab presumably during the Karakota period, when parts of Punjab were included in Kashmir.

The existence of Tibetan racial influence on the ancient Kashmirian population is also indicated. The *Bhauttas*, a people of Tibetan extraction, overran the valley of Kashmir, according to Kalhan, in the periods preceding the *Huns* invasion. It is also stated that some religious teachers from Tibet settled in Kashmir. The western Tibetans who had, thus, an intimate relation with Kashmir in earlier days, invaded Kashmir in the last days of the Hindu rule around fourteenth century. Kalhana also speaks of a caste called *Kirata*, who constituted an important community in the lower stratum of the society. The *Kirata*, evidently belonged to the Tibeto-Burman racial group. They were apparently yellowish in complexion, with a nose of medium width and were round headed.

Considerable influx of people from the Indian plains also took place. Kashmir formed a part of the far-flung Maurya empire, and people from other parts of the empire entered and settled in the valley. From the historical evidence it is clear that gradual and constant migration of people from Indian plains took place in Kashmir throughout the period of Hindu rule.

The people migrating from the plains of India had different ethnic background. We have no definite knowledge about their racial characteristics nor do we know at present how for these different races influenced the people of Kashmir. During later times and well into the post-Independance era, Kashmir has received various types of people of different races, languages and cultures. some of these came as invaders and plunderers, while others came to settle in the valley; some merged with the local population, while others, particularly those who came comparatively recently, live in isolation maintaining particular identity. Population groups like the Muslim Turks from Sinkiang have come as refugees and settled in the valley, after the Chinese tightened control there in 1949. Similarly, after the Chinese occupation of Tibet, many Tibetan refugees have come and settled in Kashmir. There is a big settlement of Pushtu speaking Afghans settled in Gutlibagh, Gandherbal, not very far from Srinagar. In the south of Kashmir there is a settlement of Turkish speaking *Bombas*. Likewise, there are other migrant groups which are scattered over the valley. It is not possible to take an estimate of the specific races who came to valley in the far past. since there is not systematic record of their infiltration. But in the present population of Kashmir we find traces of different ethnic features in the very formation of their bodies, in their language and in their culture. As to how far these different

strains have influenced the population composition of Kashmir, only an exhaustive physical anthropological study of the people can reveal.

The ethnological analysis of the people of Kashmir can never be complete unless and until an account of their physical and physiognomic traits, and even to some extent their physiological characteristics, is taken. In fact only the results of a comprehensive physical anthropological examination of representative samples of people of different strata of the society as well as of other isolated population groups, carried on in the same uniform method, can reveal to a great extent the specific human races that have entered Kashmir since the dawn of history and also ascertain the degree of their inter-mixture upto the present day. Only piece-meal studies on some aspects of the physical anthropology of Kashmir are available at present which are not sufficient to make inference of this type. On the evidence available at present however, the majority of Kashmiris possess a light transparent brown skin and are usually of medium to tall stature. They are much long-headed, have a well developed forehead, a long narrow face, regular features and a prominent, straight and finely cut narrow nose. The same type is found among the people of Afghanistan, Chitral, Baltistan, and northern Punjab. This type of race has been termed variously as the Mediterranean, the Indo-Afghan, the Nordic, and the Indic by varions physical anthropologists.

(Courtesy: Radio Kashmir, Sgr.)

EVERYONE of us has his body—chariot, which keeps plying on its stipulated path night and day. Destiny is far off and journey hazardous. A rider with distracted deliberation will make the journey more complicated and trying for finding out the homeward trackless path. So do nothing while doing everything. Walk to the tune of your own steps. Only wait easy at the turning. Look above and below, right and left just in earnest awareness. Watch. Help will come. Seek the central Gate and enter there with one bluff bounce.* You will blush in universal privacy's eternal quietude and perennial joy. This is short-cut to Immortal Home.*

Jankinath Kaul 'Kamal'

(*Frank) (*Knock)

SUFI POETRY IN KASHMIRI

—Moti Lal Saqi

Sufi poetry constitutes a bright chapter of our literature—Sufism reached Kashmir in the 14th century through Central Asian missionaries. When it reached here it absorbed some new elements in to its body. Keeping in view this thing when we talk about the Kashmiri sufi poetry we have to keep in mind those currents and under currents which shaped the doctrine of Kashmiri Sufis.

A close examination of that part of our poetry which has been placed under the head of 'Sufi poetry' reveals that besides the Tasawuf (Islamic mysticism) this poetry has the direct influence of 'Shunyavada', 'Kashmir Shaivism' 'Vedanta' and to some extent of Bhakti poetry also. Without the basic knowledge of these four schools of mysticism it is impossible to comprehend or explain the Sufi poetry in Kashmiri.

It is to be noted that 'Shunyavada' has indirectly influenced almost all the Sufi poets but there are some poets who have made 'Shunyavada' the pivot of their poetry consciously or unconsciously.

Right from Nund Rishi (1377-1442 AD) to Ahad Zargar (b. 1900-) all the Sufi poets have benefitted from this or that school ot Indian philosophy, either through books or through tradition. In the case of Sufis the tradition has played the main part in imparting the knowledge. Kashmiri mysticism is as a matter of fact a confluence of various streams of mysticism and thas bus something peculiar about it. It has its own way and temper.

The Rishi order of Kashmir deserves to be discussed in the first instance as this is the first order of mystics which emerged here in the first phase of spread of Islam.

Nund Rishi is the first poet who derived some inspiration from the Islam. He established an order of his own called the Rishi order, which is totally of local origin The philosophy of this order of ascetics is universal brotherhood, nonviolence, self mortification, public service, celibacy and asceticsm.

Nund Rishi was no doubt a Mussalman by faith but he inherited nothing from the out siders. His poetry has a deep influence of Buddhism. He was a perfect vegetarian and was dead against the injury and killing of living beings. In his way of life he was nearer to Mahavira than to Buddha.

Nund Rishi's poetry is the vehicle of his thoughts and thinking. At certain places he speaks the language of Kashmir shaivism and Vedanta :

Oh God you are all pervading
You are the self in our body
What ever you want to communicate
You communicate it with out making a noise
Oh beloved God I fail to understand
What is the sin and what is the virtue in your eyes.

The very thought of death frightens him and he cries out :

Death is a lion, he will not allow you to run away
He will pick you out of the flock
One has but to taste the hemlock of death
Alas I failed to perceive the reality in advance.

Nund Rishi's poetry is termed as 'Shruk'. People recite it as the sacred lore. Some portions of his mystic poetry touch the sublime. In his thinking and execution of theme he is close to Guru Nanak and Kabir. In Nund Reshi the tradition of old 'salilahari' and 'patrahari' Rishis is in bloom. In fact his self is the meeting place of a number of Rishi schools of yore .Most of the longer poems of Nund Rishi are close to devotional poetry and Bhajan. His famous poem 'Buddha charit' which would help a lot to understand his philosophy is unfortunately lost for ever.

It is Souch Kral (d. 1852) who attracts our attention after Nund Rishi from the galaxy of Sufi poets. His poetry is the mirror of his spiritual attainments. His poetry contains the music of soul and rhythm of heart beats.

Souch Kral's conception of the world is the conception of 'Maya' advocated by Adi-Shankara :-

This world is but a halting place
Why should one obsorb his self in its activities
One is supposed to leave it any time
What ever we see around us is nothing more than an illusion.

Some of his compositions constitute a precious portion of our Sufi poetry.

Nima Saab (d. 1880) is also good poet of Sufi School. A limited number of his compositions has come down to us and it is very difficult to fix his position in the brotherhood of Sufi poets. But at the same time one can not under-estimate the inner music and spiritual fervour of his compositions.

Rahman dar (D. 1897) is a Sufi poet of rank. His marvellous poem 'Shesh Rang' (six phases) is one of the best compositions of our literature. This poem is the esoteric expression of spiritual experiences. It is more a word picture painting rather than a poem and deserves understanding than explanation. Rest of his poetry too is of good standard. Shah Gafoor (d. 1890) Rahim Saab (d. 1865-75) Shamas Faqir (d. 1901) Asad Paray (B. 1862 d. 1920) and Samad Mir (d. 1959) belong to the Kubravi order of the Sufiis. But they have some thing more common than their Sufi creed. "All the four poets have composed more Shastri poems (Poems composed under the influence of Indian philosophy having more Sanskrit in the text have been termed as Shastri poems). Their poetry is full of the terms and words connected with the various philosophical schools of India such as Dharana, Parvati Ishvar, Siva, Maheshvara, Brahama, Vishnu, Rama, Ravana, and so on.

In the treatment of the spiritual subjects these poets are at certain places more close to the various Bhakti schools. Convicitionally they represent the philosophy of Wahdat Ul-Wajood (unity of being), which is nothiug other than the Vedanta, which influenced Islamic mysticism in the early centuries of Hijra. Their path is the path of love, and their slogan knowthyself; Shams Faqir's poem, 'Beyond the void is my abode' is the climax of his poetic calibre and his spiritual attainments.

Shah Qualandar (d. 1870) is another important poet of the Kashmiri Sufi School of poets. He is the only poet who has retained the influence of non-Islamic schools to the minimum. His Masnavi 'Ibrahim-udham' is a perfect piece of sufi-poetry and testament of his Sufi faith. Other than this masnavi there are only a few compositions of Shah Qualandar available now. Wahab Khar (d. 1912) is the poet who is held in high esteem by all the Sufis, but his compositions have some flaws and drawbacks of metre. He may have been a great Sufi but he is not a Sufi poet of the rank. At certain places his poetry seems more close to prose than to be classed as poetry. Ahmad Butwari (d. 1918) is remembered only because of his beautiful poem Nai (Flute). Some of his poems are more close to Lila and Bhajans than to be classed as Sufi compositions.

Other sufi poets who deserve to be mentioned here include Waza Mahmood, Karam Buland, Mumin Saab, Maqbool Kralwari and others.

Quadir Saabi Kaina (19th century) is a poet of Kubravi order of Sufis, but he is the only poet whose poetry is but the expression of Shunya Vada of Mahayana Buddhism. Shunya (Void) and its various phases are but the pivot of his poetry. It is because of this thing that he is known to people as Quadir Saab "Kaina" (Quadir the Void). Other Sufi poets too have discussed the term 'Kaina' (void) in their poetry but he has danced round the void for the whole life and tried to fathom it. Explaining the void he says :

What I heard and experienced
is a void beyond expression
I delved deep in my self
There is nothing other than the Void
The seers have come to understand
that the external truth is nothing other than the void
One who has merged his self in it
He has the understanding of the void
Which is beyond the expression

The light has not gone out, prominent poets like Abdul Ahad Zargar is still among us holding up the banner of Sufi poetry. Ahad Zargar is a Sufi and a poet of merit. He has the capacity to versify his experiences with command and poetic grandeur. Some of his poems have been censured because he is a non—conformist. In a private talk Zargar told us that the last stage of the spiritual quest is the astonishment. Eternal reality has no form and colour. It is that which can not be explained. One can comprehend rather perceive it but can not express it.



A. A. Azad	Kashmiri Zaban aur Shayiri 3 Vols (1962-64)
Amin Kamil	Sufi Shayiri (3 Vols) Srinagar 1964-68
Charles Moore	The Indian mind (Hawxii-1966)
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Qyoom Rafiqi	Sufism in Kashmir
Suniti Kumar Chatter Ji	The cultural heritage of India (Calcutta-2971)

LALLA—DED

Prof. B. N. Parimoo

In the long line of 'mystical phenomena' that India has witnessed from time to time enriching and embellishing our cultural heritage, Lalla-Ded of Kashmir stands out as a prominent milestone on the SPIRITUAL HIGHWAY. She led the vanguard as early as the first quarter of the fourteenth century of the Christian era.

Lalla-ded was born soon after Kashmir had been subjected to an unprecedented carnage and plunder at the hands of ZULJU, presumably a Tartar marauder, and his barbarous hordes. Fourteenth century, as a whole, has been a dark period in the chequered history of Kashmir, and in that bleak firmament was thrown up a spiritual light which has continued to brighten the cultural horizon of Kashmir. Her mystical poetry, known in common parlance as the LALLA-VAKHS, brings solace to human mind today as ever before. The vakhs are an expression of the flowering of the soul of the Yogeshwari. Unequivocally they indicate the path of yoga, a practical discipline for the attainment of the highest knowledge.

Like Sri Ramakrishna, Lalla-ded was a spiritual prodigy. She had the benefit of guidance from a Siddha Guru, Sri Srikantha. In her early married life she had to face very un-toward circumstances, social and domestic, and was almost pushed into the Slough of Despond. In her moments of despair she wailed :

I am towing the bark on the Sea with a rope of untwined yarn;
How I wish my God were to help ferry me across !
My efforts are wasting away like water poured in an unbaked earthen plate;
How I long for return Home;

आँमि पन, स'दरस नावि छ्स लमान
कति बोजि दय म्योन म्यति दियि तार ।
आँम्यन टाक्यन पोंञ जुन शमान
जुव छुम ब्रमान गार, गछ़ँ हाँ ॥

And again :

I came by the highway but do not return by the same,
In the middle of the long embankment, I find the day coming to a close,
Searching my pocket, I find not a penny;
Alas! what shall I pay the ferryman to carry me across?

आयस वतै गयसना वतै
सुमन स्वथि मंज़ लूसुम दोह
चंदस वुछुम त हार ना अते
नाव, तारस दिम क्या बोह ॥

But it was not long before she received the WORD of initiation from her Guru. Intensive practice followed which culminated in spiritual perfection. She sings of her attainment in quite a few verses. She says :

By constant practice, the limited self was dissolved in the unlimited (Self),
The qualified Being merged with AKASHA (the unqualified Being) into one homogeneous whole!
The void melted away. Nothing was left over except the ANAMAYA,—the stainless, the pure;
That is the lesson to you, O learned man!

अब्या'सी स्वव्यका'स्य लय, व्यथू
गगनस सगुण म्यूल समि चटा ।
शून्य गोल अनामय मोतू
युहोय व्वप'दीश छुय बटा ।

In the state of Samadhi, the seen and the unseen; the heard and the unheard; the static and the dynamic! in short, all distinctions of experience sublimated into one vast encompassing Being.

On the most subtle plane, Lalla-ded reveals to us glimpses of the highest Truth. She experiences Truth as a sheer, Absolute unity. and gives us the benefit of her experience through her vakhs. She does not forget to remind the aspirant of the great need to control the mind. She says :

I drew the reins of the steed of chitta,
I compressed the breath circulating through the ten nadis :
Lo : the Sasi-kala melted and dripped,
And the void mingled with the Void !

च्यत तुर्ग वगिह्यथ रोटुम
च्यथि मिलविथ दशि नाडि वाव ।
तवय श'शिकल व्यगलिथ वुछुम
श्न्यस शुन्हाह मीलिथ गो ॥

The perfection of her yoga is revealed through many a vakh and we may take an illustrative one as follows.

I, Lalla, willingly entered the garden-gate,
There, O Joy ! I found Siva united with Sakti;
There and then I got absorbed drinking at the Lake of Nectar.
Dead to the world am I, though still alive.

लल बोह् चा़यस़ स्वमन बागुबरस
वुछुम शिवस शक्त मीलिथ त, वाह् ।
तति लय क'रमस अमृतस़रस
ज़िदय मरस त, म्य़' करि क्याह् ॥

As an adept yogini, Lalla.ded entered into Samadhi at will, and experienced the unity of transcendental Siva and His power of manifestation, the omnipotent Sakti. Lalla-ded categorically lauds the will of the aspirant. She upholds that the insight into the regions of True Knowledge can be attained by one who has a genuine, intense, burning desire for the Lord. The vakh runs :

For natural insight, mere selfcontrol and continence are not enough.
The gateway to deliverance is opened by a mere will.
Getting dissolved in Him, like salt in water,
Sahaja thought is still so difficult to attain.

सहुज़स शम त दम नो गछे
य'छि प्रावख मुक्ती द्वार ।
सलिलस लवण ज़न मीलिथ गछे
तोति छुय दुर्लब सहज़ व्यचा़र ॥

For obtaining spontaneous samadhi, the seers stress the 'will' of the aspirant.
Lalla-ded became a Jeevan-mukta, released from the bondage of duality and rid of the wheel of transmigration.

From the time Lalla-ded received the WORD from her Guru, she meditated on the primal sound and the Bij-mantra, Om. Her intense love of the Lord coupled with yogic practice ensured her perfection. The "Ajapa Gayatri' mantra with each formulation of breath led her to her spiritual goal. Sri Ramakrishna too recognizes the value of meditation on OM. He says; "Whan a man sheds tears and when his hair stands on end if he utters the name of Hari or Rama even once, then you may know for certian that he no longer needs to perform any rituals. Then only does he have the right to renounce them, or rather, they themselves will drop away from him. Then it will be enough merely to chant the name of Rama or Hari or just the word OM... . Ritualistic worship becomes merged in the sacred Gayatri Mantra and the Gayatri likewise becomes merged in OM." In this context, the following vakhs of Lalla-ded are pertinent and useful for the aspirant.

One who fixes up only OMKAR at the naval,
And with the excercise of retained breath, builds a bridge from (the navel) to the Brahmanda,
And cons only that Mantra,
Needs not the use of thousand mantras.

अकुय ॐकार युस नाबि दरे
क्वंबय ब्रह्माण्डस सुम गरे ।
अख सुय मन्त्र च्यतस करे
तस सास मन्त्र क्याह् करे ॥

In another vakh, she says :

Chant the Ajapa Gayatri (mantra) with each breath, as HAMSA,
Give up the Ego (I-ness) and be absorbed in Him :
Whose ever abandoned his ego, verily became He.
The lesson to learn is to efface the sense of duality

अजपा गायत्री हंस हंस जपिथ
अहम त्रा'विथ सुय अद रठ़
य'म्य त्रोव अहं सुय रुद पानय
बोह न आसुन छुय व्वपदीश ॥

But the effacement of ego does not mean renunciation of hearth and home and mundane duties and obligations. Lalla-ded does not advocate escape from duties. She says:

Some renounced their hearth and home, and took to living in the forest hermitages,
All in vain! so long as the mind is not tethered at home; counting your breath day and night,
As you are so shall you be.

कव्यौ गेह् त्यज क़व्यौ वनवास
व्यफोल मन न रटिथ वास ।
द्यल-राथ गंज़ारिथ पनुन श्वास
युथुय छुख त त्युथुय आस ॥

"The kingdom of heaven is within you". Since Siva is within us as much as He is without us, we can well meet Him at home.

For self-realiztion, self-discipline is an essential prerequisite. But repression of instinctive tendencies, wants and urges may result in rebounding their effect. Lalla-ded advises proper understanding of the nature of these urges, feeding them with a thoughtful mind, and sublimating them into appropriate wholesome channels. The vakh runs as under :

Lust, Anger and Greed should be done away with,
Otherwise they will aim their darts and kill you,
Nourish them on a thoughtful mind and calm them down with righteous thoughts,

मारुख मारबूथ काम - क्रूद - लूब
नत काग़ बरिथ मारनय पान
मनय स्यन दिख स्वव्यचार शम
विषय तिहुंद क्याह-क्युथ दोर ज़ान ॥

Learn thoroughly their nature, functioning and effects. One cannot be too vigilant against the inroads of human passions. Sri Ramakrishna too says: "The curbed senses are like the in-active snake almost beaten to death. The sublimated senses cause harm to none while elevating their own to sublimity." The inner transformation is the key to the spring-board for spiritual attainment. We may not judge individuals by their external superficial behaviour, for we may be mistaken in that. She says :

Some there are who wake even while apparently asleep,
And some, apparently awake, lie in slumber deep ;
Some smell foul even after a bath,
And some, ostensibly engaged in household duties, remain actionless.

केंह छिय न्यंद्रिहती वुदी
केंचन वुद्यन न्यसर प्ययी ।
केंह छिय स्नान करिथ अपुती
केंह गेह ब'ज़िथ ति अक्रयी ।

Lalla-ded and Sri Ramakrishna gave utterance to their spiritual experiences from their heights of knowledge and understanding. They had gained the pinnacle of Truth where-from the petty discrimination between man and man totally disappears, Lalla-ded's lesson in this regard is very significant. She says :

He who has deemed another and himself as equals,
He who has deemed the day (of joy) and the night (of sorrow) alike,
He whose mind has become free from duality,
He and he alone has seen the Lord of the chiefest of gods.

पर तय पान य'म्य सोम मोन
यम्य ह्यू़व मोन द्यन किह्यो राथ ।
यम्यसुय अद्वय मन सापुन
तमिय ड्यूठुन सुरगुरनाथ ॥

And that has been the lesson of Sri Ramakrishna too. The spiritual monarchs have a fraternity of their own and their rule over human mind will continue forever.

RELIGION—TODAY AND TOMORROW

Swami Brahmeshananda

To understand the present state of religion in the world, and its future, we must clearly know what is meant by religion. The dictionary meaning of the word is "System of faith and worship, human recognition of super human controlling power, and especially of a personal God, effect of this on Conduct etc." The sanskrit word for it is "DHARMA", which is derived from the sanskrit root "*dri*", to sustain, support, to hold. In Mahabharata, dharma is defined thus :

घारणाद्धमर्मित्याहुः घर्मो घारयते प्रजाः ।
यः स्याद्धारण संयुक्तः स घर्म इति निश्चयः ॥

"By sustenance it is called dharma. Dharma sustains the society. That which has the capacity to sustain, is indeed dharma".

So religion according to this definition is that factor, force or element which sustains an individual, a society, or a nation, during periods of stress and strain and prevents them from dis-integration and death when faced with opposing forces. Man wants to live. To exist is the most primitive urge in man, and when he is faced with hostile powers of disease, death and old age, of natural calamities and competing beings of his or other species, he seeks something which could support him and make him live. And the factor found strongest in so doing, through the history of mankind has been 'faith' faith in an all powerful being having control over enemy forces, and able to save man. Thus religion as faith is a tremendous factor in the integration of man.

This faith ultimately evolves, from its primitive state into faith in three things, on one or more of which almost every religion of the world is based :
1. faith in a personal God. 2. faith in a prophet, 3. faith in a book.

Now, this religion of faith has certain problems. Firstly, by its very nature it is blind ; reason has no place there. Secondly it excludes other faiths. While it does sustain, and provide strength and integrity to man, and unites a group or society

with a common faith, it excludes other groups having different faiths. This is the reason why such religion has caused conflicts and wars. It has acted as a disintegrating force also.

Another problem with religion based on faith is that it cannot withstand the onslaughts of persent day science and technology, nor can it face the searchlight of reason and research. Science demands proof of the existence of God. It wants to see God as it sees an atom in the laboratory. It does not want merely to believe, but wants to *see*. On the practical side, science gives man an effective tool in the form of technology to fight against disease, old age and death, and also modern weapons to conquer his enemies.

For a period of time Science did succeed in alluring man to give up faith in God and to worship the all powerful matter. But today modern man stands disillusioned. He has learnt that science can give him bodily comforts and sensory enjoyments but cannot integrate his personality or give him mental peace. As a famous scientist has put it, 'Science simply prolongs life, religion deepens it'. Science can make the tree of life tall but cannot deepen its roots, and with shallow roots, how long can it stand?

Thus, here we stand today at a critical period of human evolution when the human race is facing entirely new forces, new challenges. Religion, being an integral aspect of human existence has also been evolving through the ages, and while fear and an urge to survive had Influenced its evolution in the past, a scientific temper and a fast, technologically oriented life are the novel challenges which it has to meet now.

For most people, specially of the west, faith in God, a prophet, or a book, has lost its meaning. On the other hand the orthodox, in a desparate bid to hold on to these have become more intolerent and bigotted. Thus there are two groups of people, one the non-religious materialists, men without faith, and the other the narrow fanatics, who fight for their own idols of clay. The first group of people may have comforts and enjoyments, but they are not happy. They live in constant fear and tension. The second group of people also have no peace. They are on the defensive against the growing onslaught of new forces.

But there is also a third group which is searching, probing for a new religion. This is evident from the fact that newer religious and spiritual societies are being increasingly formed all over the world.

According to a recent survey, there are as many as 1187 religious denominations in U. S. A. alone outside the main stream of major religions. These are termed variously as spiritualists, religious psychics, occultists and assorted New Age sects. And it is noteworthy that not all of these have faith as their basis.

II

Almost a century ago, Swami Vivekananda had presented an outline of the future religion which could be scientific and could stand the test of reason, and at the same time be able to sustain and integrate man in the deepest sense.

Defining religion, Swami Vivekananda said "Each soul is potentially divine, The goal is to manifest this Divinity within by controlling nature, external and internal. Do this either by work, or worship, or psychic control or by philosophy—by one or more or all these, and be free. This is the whole of religion. Doctrines, or dogmas, or rituals, or books, or temples, or forms, are but secondary details".

Elsewhere he says, 'Religion is realization, it is being and becoming'. 'If there is God we must see him.' And indeed God can be seen, just as a scientist sees an atom in the laboratory—and even more clearly. When Swami Vivekananda asked Sri Ramakrishna, 'Sir, have you seen God,' he replied, 'Yes, I have seen God, just as I see you. only in a much intenser sense, but who wants to see him?" Most people merely talk of God, of having faith in God, but the fact is that the so called theists are no less atheists than a scientist who challenges religion.

Thus, the future religion must be based on realization rather than on faith, and this emphasis carries religion into the realm of what is called mysticism to see God, to commune with God and to become one with God. The Upanishadic seers have proclaimed the same thing,

वेदाहमेतं पुरुषमहान्तमादित्यवर्णं तमसः परस्तात् ।
तमेव विदित्वाऽतिमृत्युमेति नान्यः पन्थाः विद्यतेऽयनाय ॥

"I have seen the Supreme Being, luminous like the sun, beyond the darkness of ignorance. Knowing him alone one can transcend death. There is no other way."

While faith may lead to fanaticism and conflict, realization leads to peace, joy and bliss. One man of realization is enough to surchrage a society for a century. His very presence transmits peace, and blessedness. But what about faith? Has it really no value at all ? Swami Vivekananda says that if you want to have faith, have faith in your own self, which in Sanskrit is called Atman. "Old religion said he is an atheist who has no faith in God. New religion says he is an atheist who has no faith in his own self". All powers are within us. Peace, bliss and strength which we attribute to God are the very nature of Atman. A personal God is only an external symbol on which we project our own nature. It is a means for the manifestation of our own Divinity.

As to the means, Swami Vivekananda has classified them into four according to the mental makeup of the individual. They are the paths of emotion, of intellect, of action and of concentration. People with an emotional temperament can achieve the same goal by loving a personal God. A rational man can manifest the Divinity within by

deep intellectual enquiry into the nature of the world and his own being. But the two paths most suited for the future generation are that of disinterested action and that of concentration. Man in an ultramodern super industrialized society of hundred years hence, will need tremendous power of concentration to govern and manipulate the powerful monster of science and this can be done by the path of concentration. But he will also need equally great power of detachment so that he remains a master and does not become a helpless slave of science. And this can be obtained by what is called Karma Yoga or the path of disinterested work.

It must not be understood that these four paths are exclusive of each other. Indeed the ideal man is he whose head, heart and hand are equally and harmoniously developed. And that religion is the ideal future religion which can provide opportunities for the formation of such ideal men.

Diversity is the plan of nature. Every man has his own individual temperament, and just as each one needs a coat of his own size, every one needs a specific religion for himself, which though may broadly resemble that of his fellow traveller, will necessarily be different from it. This in sanskrit is called *Ishta* or the chosen ideal or the chosen path. To have one pointed devotion to one's chosen path is called *Ishta-Nishta*, which is essential for the spiritual growth of an individual. But quarrels arise when we think that ours is the only right path and all the rest are wrong. Sri Ramakrishna used to say "As many faiths, so many paths". And Swami Vivekananda has gone to the extent of saying that it is good that the sects are multiplying, let them increase till every man will be a sect in himself. But the important thing to remember is that all are true and lead to the same good.

रुचीनां वैचित्र्यादृजुकुटिलनानापथजुषां ।
नृणामेको गम्यः त्वमसि पयसामर्णव इव ॥

"People follow diverse paths, straight or crooked according to their different tendencies. Yet, O Lord, thou alone art the ultimate goal of all men, as is the ocean of all the rivers".

According to Swami Vivekananda's definition doctrines, dogmas, rituals, books, temples or forms are the non-essentials, secondary details of religion. More often than not, these are mistaken for the essentials of religion, and when this happens religion becomes a lifeless mockery. These need not be totally discarded but must be given their proper place as accessory means.

Finally, let it be remembred that science ond materialism are not the greatest enemies of religion. Not to understand, or to misunderstand or not to strive to manifest and realize even after understanding the true meaning of religion damage the cause of religion much more.

May the Lord lead us from untruth to truth, from darkness to light and from death to immortality. ●●●

Lalla—A Study In Historical Perspective.

Prof. Z. L. Jala

World history furnishes evidence how, time and again reformers were born in different countries. These reformers like Mahavira, Buddha, Goshala, Lao-taze, Confucius, Jeremiah, Iasaiah and Zarvathustra appeared on the stage of life in the respective lands of their birth and voiced strong feelings against existing hedonistic creeds. They, by dint of their disciplined hard labour, austere life of penance and meditations and through true love and dedicated service paved the way for universal brotherhood and peace. They were all products of their respective environments and times which projected a very dismal picture of decadence and degeneration, following in the wake of affluence, ignorance and superstition.

These reformers, through word and deed tried to restore to health the society, religion and moral which had been bruised and mauled. But repair or reform can at best rejuvenate a fabric only to a certain extent. Such attempts cannot bring back the youthful vigour to a body organism much less might it do so to a social organism or a religious system. Things, which have undergone change, can never be the same again, for change is the inexorable Law of Nature and the principle of change militates against the concept of stability.

The stream of life continued to flow. Social, economic, technical and other forces often moving in the opposite direction but oftener in the same gave a fillip to industry trade, and commerce. Group and tribal conflicts, clash of economic interests and often enough commerce led to exodus of people professing different faiths and leading different life styles. There were adjustments and readjusment. It was amidst such movements of men and thought that Islam came to establish itself in India and subsequently in Kashmir too.. Islam represented a vigorous and virile socio-political order, apart from a definite religious belief The Indian social and political life, on the contrary, was decadent and weak. It was amidst this situation of mutual conflict and attempts at conciliation between the two diverse systems that *Bhakti* Movement in India received a fillip.

The ideal products of Indo-Islamic milieu in the 15/16th century India were Kabir and Nanak. Both of them expressed their fatigue and sickness with the existing ritual, image-worship and priesthood on religious side and voiced their vehement protest against stratification, caste system, obsolete habits and communal rancour on social side. They worked for bridging the gulf between Hindus and Muslims by emphasising their conviction that there is no difference between man and man. This conviction had come to them spontaneously with their experience; they nourished it with their ex-

periment, and though both preached and practised, quite apart from each other, they shared in common the belief of unity of man and also that of unity of God. This belief was the bedrock of their lives. Like all people in general and the reformers of bygone days (already referred to above) in particular, Kabir and Nanak were the products of their age and environment. They were agonised to see men torn asunder owing to much misunderstood and more misinterpreted religious teaching. They were shocked to see people pursue blind belief and fall easy prey to superstition. They preached the worship of the omniscient, the omnipresent and the omnipotent yet formless God. It was the need of the hour, of course. Alongside *Nirguna Bhakti*, *Saguna Bhakti* (which preaches the worship of God with a definite form) also flourished. The representatives of the latter school were Tulsi, Surdas, Mira and others.

the context of the situation analysed above, *Bhakti Marga*, too apart from *Karma Marga* and *Jnana Marga* received universal recognition as a means of salvation though its significance as a means of deliverance had been upheld by saivite Adyars and Krishnite Alvars and dicussed in the Gita and 'Narad Sataka' and several other works of ancient period.

Kashmir in the middle of the fourteenth century presented a picture of two socio-political and ethico-religious systems standing face to face with each other. It was an encounter in which the two systems sought to converse with each other even while they seemed to be in the state of conflict. It was a state of contest and dialogue. The two systems had before long to realise that they had both to survive side by side. Thus appear to have been initiated efforts of adjustment, readjustment, difference and conciliation a truth that genuine history seeks to bring home to us. This verily has been the way the world and has moved along since time immemorial. It is, this process of integration, disintegration followed by reintegration, adjustment, maladjusment and readjustment, conciliation, conflict and reconciliation that has operated and shaped the life and destiny of mankind. It is this process that has given birth to composite cultures since the days the Assyrians, the Egyptians, the Indus people and the like began to become civilized. Revival and promotion of saivism and Rishi order seem to have been an important feature of the mid-fourteenth century Kashmir. An equally important feature of the period consisted in the religious activities and services of the Allavi Sayyids, Mir Ali Hamadani and Mir Muhammad Hamadani in the cause of Islam. Lalla or Laleshwari, who appeared like a star on the spiritual firmament of Kashmir, represented in her person the ethos of the socio-religious milieu of the age. She then acted as a catalyst in the metamorphosis of this life. Like Sheikh Nuru'd-Din after her, Lalla was a self-realized soul, whose chords of existence vibrated the soul stirring reality of unity in diversity. She it was who understood better than any one else, the fact that Islam like Hinduism was a form of the fundamental reality. However she decried formalism, and hollow ritual, wherever she found these to exist. She held in derision the presumptuous priest. She regarded

life in any form in the highest esteem and therefore, in a forthright manner she condemned those who fed themselves on mutton and upbraided such people as fasted for nothing. She looked down upon 'miracle-men' and termed them as insincere and deceptive. It was natural for Lalla, who had full scent and sense of the socio-religious order and had inhaled the spirit of time, to deprecate the orthodoxy and obscurantism

It is, indeed, unfortunate and yet not surprising that she who had understood the prevailing conditions of life in amazing fulness was not understood by her contemporaries who sometimes censured her and very often rated her. Her expressions, so full of candour, wisdom and courage, was an anathemia to the orthodox who had a vested interest in perpetuating the existing order. Perhaps the elite did not approve of the unconventional practices of Lalla. Jonaraja, Srivara, Prajya Bhatta and Suka make no mention of Lalla. A couple of hagiological references to Lalla are to be found occuring for the first time in the *Tarikh-i-Husaini* and the *Asrar-ul-Abrar* of Baba Dawud Mishkati. These references are of seventeenth century and are far from being precisely biographical or historical. In the circumstances not much is known about Lalla's personal life, save the fact that she was married. But her married life was to end before long.

It is generally believed that after a certain stage in her mystic career she ran out of clothes and kept moving about quite naked till the very end of her life. It is interesting to refer in this connection to P. N. H. Prabhu's explicit statement of the *Grihya Sutras* wherein "the marriageable maiden" is referred to as a *nagnika*. Dr. Ghosh, speaking on the same theme, points to the meaning given to the word *Nagnika* in Matridatta's commentary, which explains it as a girl who is fit to be undressed (from *nagna*-undressed) in privacy with her husband for cohabitation and therefore is one who has attained perfect maturity". "*Nagnika*, therefore;" in Dr. Ghosh's opinion "in ancient times meant a young but mature girl. It is difficult to believe that *nagnika* meant a naked girl, (i.e. a child too young to put on clothes) having regard to the fact that the *Mahabharata* advocates the marriage of a *nagnika* of sixteen" Manu considers that "the marriage ceremony (*Vaivahiko vidhih*) of a maiden is equivalent to the initiation ceremony (upanayana) of a boy; and serving her husband (*Patiseva*) and staying with him is equivalent to the boy's service of the *guru* and residence in his *asrama*"

Viewed and examined in the above context, the general belief of people that Lalla moved about naked seems to be no more than a mere figment of imagination. In fact Lalla was a self initiated soul and she took very little time to outstrip Siddha Sri Kantha who as her *guru* had formally initated her. To the self-realized Lalla the difference between her outside and inside seemed to melt away. She used to be in a state of perpetual bliss where everything, save her maker, lost meaning and all that had form and shape, except Siva, ceased to exist. It was in this state of her absolute communion that Lalla undressed herself before her Lord and Master. This seems to suggest a

state of absolute surrender and unquestioned resignation. I would be doing great injustice to Lalla and all that she stood for, if we understand by the term "nudity" sheer 'nakedness' in literary parlance What the term 'nudity' is thought to convey here is that there is nothing that can hide her from Him nor is there a thing that may conceal Him from her. The expression as such is allegorical. In fact there is nothing that seems to stand between Lalla and Siva. The two have become indistinguishable, and that is what self realization actually means. In such a state one is likely to go into a trance and that is perhaps what 'natsun' would connote. In spiritual experience particularly after realization of the self, one can go into ecstasy and rapture without wondering or moving about.

It is indeed "a fact" says B. N. Pandita " That saivism broadened the-views of Kashmirian theologians and helped a lot in the mixing up of the orders of saiva and sufi saints into one line and also in developing mutual tolerance and respect between the followers of two different faiths, under the effective guidance of saints like Laleshwari and her worthy disciple, Sheikh Nuru'd-Din (Nund-Reshi). The line of those saints of the mixed faiths is still going on in the valley and commands respect from the peoples of all faiths there".

What Lalla preached and practised is not a "mere book religion as evolved in the minds of great thinkers and idealists, but a picture of the actual hopes and fears of common folk......" As such it is not for nothing that Lalla Yogini is still referred to as *Lalla Moj*, *Lal-Ded* (mother Lalla). Her vakas (epigrams) are on the tip of every Kashmiri tongue.

Thus we may conclude with saying that Laleshwari represents in her person and teachings the best traditions of Kashmir philosophy and anticipates the emerging pattern of life which was to embody the spirit of a common outlook and common culture and over and above anything else a spirit of tolerance. Lalla's life and work were destined to fulfil a great historical purpose. ●●●

SRI RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAM, SRINAGAR.

Annual General Report
1981-82

Sh. B. N. Koul
Secretary,

It is a mixed lot of people that move in. Devotees attracted by the Shrine, book-lovers and readers who find the Ashrama library a store-house of knowledge and people in need of tender word of solace and medical service, all these constitute the activities of this Ashrama.

Worship

The Shrine is the very heart of the Ashrama, special functions like the birthdays of great ones, Navratri festival (Sri Durga Puja), Shri Ramnam Sankirtanam of Ekadasi evenings, Bhajans and recitations form a regular feature of the Ashrama.

Library & Reading Room

By the end of the year 31st March, 1982, the number of books was 2378. Books were issued to nearly 1000 borrowers for reading. Additions to the children's section and text book section for University students have been made this year. The number of newspapers and periodicals in the Ashrama Reading Room were 3 and 28 respectively including some subscribed by friends from abroad. An amount of Rs. 10,000/- (Rs. 6000/- as Grant-in-aid from Govt. of India plus Rs. 4000/- from Ashrama funds) was spent on addition to library by way of books and furniture.

Dispensary

Though looking after the inmates it has a potential of developing into a full fledged dispensary for service to the public. At present it caters to first-aid and primary medical needs. The infra-structure for starting a Clinical Dispensary is almost complete except for suitable space to start the project.

Education

The Ashrama provides some audio-visual and allied facilities for disseminating scientific and cultural education. Many films borrowed from various institutions in the country were screened during last years for the benefit of college students and general public. Taped lectures and music was played towards the same end. An Essay competition was held to involve the youth of the State in our activities. About 50 students from different colleges and Schools of the valley participated. Prizes were distributed on 12.7.1982 by Swami Sreedharananda Ji Maharaj, Secretary, Sri Ramakrishna Mission Seva Ashrama, Lucknow. We fervently hope to create new centres of learning and Education with the overall emphasis of providing residential type of institutions for our future generations.

Cultural & Spiritual Camps

Periodic cultural and spiritual retreats in the remote countryside of Kashmir and outside the valley are held to provide opportunities to the members to be very close to the spiritual stream of the country.

Conducting of social service camps consisting of first-aid medical service and sale of books at Sri Kshir Bhawani has become an annual and regular feature of the Ashrama.

Many Monks and devotees of our Order had Sri Amarnath Darshan this year as usual. All the facilities possible were rendered by this Ashrama to make this Yatra comfortable from them.

Srimat Swami Gaurishwaranand Ji Maharaj (Srimat Ramoy Maharaj); Srimat Swami Sreedharanand Ji Maharaj and others visited Kashmir this year. Class lectures and public meetings were addressed by them at the Ashrama from time to time.

Sale of Book

During the last financial year books worth Rs. 14947.70 were sold.

Construction of New Shrine Hall, Library/Dispensary & Auditorium

With the generous cooperation of Samaj-Sudhar Samiti, the Ashrama is to construct a Shrine Hall, Library, Dispensary and auditorium complex at Sivalaya. The necessary plan has already been sanctioned by the concerned authorities and the work is expected to start by the Ist week of May, 1982. Fund raising movement has already started.

Scriptural Classes

Classes on scriptures and Kashmir Savia thought (STAVA CHINTAMANI OF SRI BHATTA-NARAYANA) were conducted regularly every week in the Ashram by Sri Janki Nath Kaul and Prof. Neelakanth Gurtu respectively. Our thanks are due to them.

Thanks

Our heartfelt thanks are due to our donors, friends and well wishers, whose help and cooperation alone have made it possible to consolidate our services.

Our thanks are also due to M/s M. K. Kaul & Associates, chartered Accountants, Srinagar.

The Message of Sri Ramakrishna and his direct associates is steadily spreading and many young and ardent souls are coming into closer touch with the ideals of the Ashrama.

Appeal: In order to make our efforts of constructing a Shrine Hall, Dispensary, Library-cum-reading Room and an Auditorium, a success, we appeal to all the Devotees and generous people to come forward and donate generously towards the Building Fund of the Ashrama.

REGISTERED UNDER THE REGISTRATION OF SOCIETIES ACT VI 1998 VIDE No: 138/S of 1971.

M. K. KAUL & ASSOCIATES
Chartered Accountants

Phone : 78399
MUNIR MANZIL
REGAL CHOWK
RESIDENCY ROAD
SRINAGAR, KASHMIR.

Audit Report

We have audited the annexed Balance Sheet of Shri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Shivalaya, Karannagar, Sringar, as on 31st March, 1982 and the Income and Expenditure Account of the said institution for the year ended on the said date and have to report as under :-

a) We have obtained all the information and explanations which to the best of our knowledge and belief were necessary for the purpose of our audit.

b) In our opinion proper books of account have been kept by the institution, so for as appears from our examination of such books.

c) In our opinion and to the best of our information and according to the explanations given to us, the Balance Sheet and the Income and Expenditure Account, read together with the Notes there on, give a true and fair view.

i) In so for as it relates to the Balance Sheet, of the state of the affairs of the Ashrama as at 31st March, 1982 and

ii) In so far it relates to Income and Expenditure Accounts, of the surplus for the year ended 31st March 1982.

Sd/-

Dated, Srinagar
the 19 June 1982.

M. K. Kaul & Associates
Chartered Accountants

SRI RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAMA, SHIVALAYA, SRINAGAR
BALANCE SHEET FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31.3.1982

LIABILITIES

CAPITAL FUND		
Balance as per last Balance sheet	94,588,10	
ADD :		
i) Excess of Income over expd, for year 81-82.	6,000.53	
ii) Grant-in-aid utilised for purchase of hooks.	5,535.50	1,06,124.14
Building fund		
Balance as per last Bal. Sheet	31,521.75	
Add. donations recd. during the year.	1,46405.26	
	1,77,927.00	
Less expenses during year	770.00	1,77,157.00
Dispensary fund		
Balance as per last Bal. Sheet	16,356.76	
Donations recd. during year.	835.00	17,191.76
Endowment fund		
Balance as per last Bal. sheet		25,000.00
Grant-in-aid		
(From Central Govt.)		
Balance as per last Bal. sheet.	5,535.50	
Less utilised during year.	5,536.50	
Library Deposit		
Balance as per Last Balance sheet		1,252.50
Furniture & Fixture Fund		
Balance as per last Balance sheet.		1,900.00
Sundry Creditors		2,786.70
Total		Rs. 3,31,414.09

ASSETS

FIXED ASSETS (As por schedule attached)		81,001.90
Current Assets		
i) Stock in hand) (As taken, valued & verified by the Management)	19,631.80	
ii) Sundry Debtors	1,479.90	
iii) Deposit with P&T Deptt.	800.00	
iv) Cash Bank & Other Balance		
A) Cash in hand	3,554.00	
B) In savings Bank Acctt. with United Comm. Bank (Building Fund A/C)	1,40,992.00	
C) In Savings Bank A/C with Punjab National Bank	1,113.00	
D) In Savings Bank A/C with Punjab National Bank (Library fund A/C)	132.40	
B) In Fixed Deposit Punjab National Bank.	67,000.00	
F) Interest accrued on fixed deposit but not due	15,709.00	2,50,412,19
Total		Rs. 3,31,414.09

Sd/- B. N. Kaul
Secretary

Sd/- J. L. Hakoo
Accountant

As per our separate report of even date.
Date, Srinagar
the 19 June 1982

Sd/- M. K. Koul
M. K. Kaul & Associates
Chartered Accountant

SRI RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAMA, SHIVALAYA, SRINAGAR.

Income and Expenditure Accounts for the year ended 31st March, 1982.

EXPENDITURE

Stock in hand (1.4.1982) Books & other saleables).	15,583.10
Purchases during the year (Books & other saleables)	17,412.75
Food and Fuel	3,114.30
Insurance Premium	150.00
Maintenance & repairs	1,157.75
Postage, Stationery & Printing	2,816.85
Maintenance of Lawn	354.50
News paper & periodicals	1,273.20
Watch & ward	200.00
Celebration expenses	811.95
Audit fee	400.00
Travelling & conveyance	41.00
Bank charges	15.20
Miscellaneous expenses	166.00
Depreciation	6,260.12
Excess of Income over expd. transferred to capital Fund Account.	6,000.53
Total : Rs.	55,757.25

INCOME

Sale of Books & other saleables.		14,947.70
Stock in hand (31.3.1982) (Books & other saleables)		19,631.80
Donations.		9,442.65
Subscription from Members		2,613.00
Interest on Bank deposits.		5,995.38
Thakur Seva		
Receipts during the year.	1,838.36	
Less expenses during the year	1,320.60	717.76
Sadhu Seva		
Receipts during the year.	682.00	
Less expenses during the year	267.95	314.05
Miscellaneous receipts		257.00
Difference in books written off.		37.91
Total Rs.		55,757.25

Sd/- B. N. Koul
Secretary

Sd/- J. L. Hakoo
Accountant

As per our separate report of even date.
Dated, Srinagar, the 19th June 1982.

Sd/- M. K. Koul
M. K. Kaul & Associates
Chartered Accountants.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAMA, SHIVALAYA, SRINAGAR.

Schedule of Fixed Assets as on 31-3-1982

Particulars	WDV as on 31.3.81	Additions during year 1981-1982.	Total	Depreciation for the year	Written down valve as on 31.3.82.
Tape Recorder	3,346.11	...	3,346.11	334.61	3,011.50
Utensils	1,914.32	604.80	2,519.12	251.91	2,267.21
Fans	1,172.23	...	1,172.23	117.22	1,055.01
Typewriter	746.25	...	746.25	74.62	671.62
Projector	2,959,36	...	2,959.36	591.86	2,367.50
Amplifier	1,049.76	...	1,049.76	104.97	944.79
Gas Lamps	55.77	...	55.77	5.57	50.20
Electric fees	36.75	...	36.75	13.12	33.08
Gas stove	55.77	...	55.77	5.57	50.20
Voltage sterter	131.22	...	131.22	13.12	118.10
Library books	7,114.00	6,736.10	13,850 14	1,385.00	12,465.14
Furniture & Bedding	4,778.52	2,871.40	7,649.92	765.00	6,884.92
Building Muscial	43,779.90	...	43,779.90	1,094.00	42,685.90
Instruments Dispensary	1,878.89	...	1,878.89	187.88	1,691.01
Testing Equipment	5,620.23	...	5,620.23	843.00	4,777.23
Refregrator	1,632.00	...	1,632.00	326.40	1,305.60
Gyaser water heater.	778 60	...	778.60	155.72	622.88
Total Rs.	77,049.72	10,212.30	87,262 00	6,260.12	81,001.93

Sd/- B. N. Koul
Secretary

Sd/- J. L. Hakoo
Accountantant

Sd/- M. K. Kaul
M. K. Kaul & Associates
Chartered Accountants.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAMA, SHIVALAYA

Receipts and Payments Account for the Year Ended 31st March, 1982

(LIBRARY ACCOUNT)

Receipts	Rs.	Payments		Rs.
Grant-in-aid				
From Govt. of India		Purchases of Books		6739.30
Deptt. of Culture		Purchases of furniture		2871.40
Balance in Hand as on 1.4.1981;		Binding charges of books		290.00
the amount received in March 81:	6000.00	Maintenance of Library		12.00
		Refund of Library deposits		80.00
Donations	3518.90	**Cash and Bank balance**		
Library Deposits	470.00	Cash in hand	4.10	
Interest on Bank deposit	140.30	Cash in Bank	132.40	136.50
Total Rs.	10129.20	Total Rs.		10129.20

The foregoing Receipts and Payments Accounts of Shri Ramakrishna Ashrama Shivalaya, Srinagar, LIBRARY ACCOUNT for the year ended 31st March, 1982, is correct in accordance with the books of account maintained and produced to us.

Dated, Srinagar,
19 June 1982.

Sd/- B. N. Koul
Secretary

J. L. Hakoo
Accountant

Sd/- M. K. Kaul
M. K. Kaul & Associates
Chartered Accountants.

Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama

SHIVALAYA, KARANNAGAR, SRINAGAR.

Members of the Executive Body—1982

1.	Shri Shambhu Nath Bhan	President.
2.	Shri K L. Dhar	Vice-President, (Sr.)
3.	Shri K. L Swarup	Vice President (Jr.)
4.	Swami Shankarananda	Manager.
5.	Shri B. N. Kaul	Secretary.
6.	Shri M. K. Dhar	Asstt. Secretary.
7.	Shri J. L. Hakhu	Treasurer-cum-Librarian.
8.	Shri I. K. Kaul	Member.
9.	Shri P. N. Kaul	Member.
10.	Smt. Jai Kishori Pandita	Member.
11.	Shri C. L. Sapru	Member.
12.	Shri P. L. Bhan	Member.
13.	Shri S. K. Wali	Member.
14.	Shri Upender Kaul	Member.
15.	Shri M. K. Kothidar	Member.

"The only God to worship is the human soul in the human body. Of course, all animals are temples too, but man is the highest, the Taj Mahal of temples. If I cannot worship in that, no other temple will be of any advantage".

—*Swami Vivekananda*

The light of the gas-lamp illumines different parts of the city with varying intensity, but all the lamps receive their supply of gas from one common source; similarly, the religious teachers of all countries and races receive their inspiration from one Almighty Source.

Sri Ramakrishna.

I consider that the great national sin is the neglect of the masses and that is one of the causes of our downfall. No amount of politics would be of any avail until the masses in India are once more well educated, well fed, and well cared for.

Swami Vivekananda

"Be not afraid of anything. You will do marvellous work. The moment you fear, you are nobody. It is fear that is the great cause of misery in the world".

Swami Vivekananda.

"So long as even a dog of my country remains without food, to feed and take care of him is my religion, and anything else is either non-religion or false religion".

—S. Vivekananda.

The education which does not help the common mass of people to equip themselves for the struggle for life, which does not bring out strength of character, a spirit of philanthropy, and the courage of a lion—is it worth the name?

—Swami Vivekananda



"Him I call Mahatman whose heart bleeds for the poor; otherwise he is a Duratman."

—S. Vivekananda

"Where is the strength of a devotee? He is a child of God, and his devotional tears are his mightiest weapon."

—Shri Ramakrishna

"The more intensely a person practices spiritual disciplines, the more quickly he attains God."

—*Sri Sarada Devi*

"The nearer you come to God, the more you feel peace. Peace, peace, peace, supreme peace."

—*Sri Ramakrishna*

Every duty is holy and devotion to duty is the highest from of worship of God.

Swami Vivekananda



If you want peace of mind then give up fault-finding. If you would search for fault at all, find out your own faults and shortages.

—Sri Sarada Devi

Doing good to others is virtue (dharma), injuring others is sin. Strength and manliness are virtues; weakness and cowardice are sins. Independence is virtue; hating others is sin. Faith in God and in one's ownself is virtue; doubt is sin. Knowledge of oneness is virtue; seeing diversity is sin.

—Swami Vivekananda

"Love is the gate of all the secrets of the universe."

Swami Vivekananda

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D-30

We are responsible for what we are, and whatever we wish ourselves to be, we have the power to make ourselves. If what we are how has been the result of our own past actions, it certainly follows that whatever we wish to be in future can be produced by our present actions; so we have to know how to act.

—Swami Vivekananda



A hundred thousand men and women, fired with the zeal of holiness, fortified with external faith in the Lord, and nerved to lion's courage by their sympathy for the poor and the fallen and the downtrodden, will go over the length and breadth of the land, preaching the gospel of salvation, the gospel of help, the gospel of social raising-up—the gospel of Equality.

Swami Vivekananda

A hundred thousand men and women, fired with the zeal of holiness, fortified with external faith in the Lord, and nerved to lion's courage by their sympathy for the poor and the fallen and the downtrodden, will go over the length and breadth of the land, preaching the gospel of salvation, the gospel of help, the gospel of social raising-up—the gospel of Equality.

Swami Vivekananda

Men, men, these are wanted : everything else will be ready, but strong, vigorous, believing young men, sincere to the backbone, are wanted. A hundred such and the world becomes revolutionized.

Swami Vivekananda.

Men, men, these are wanted : everything else will be ready, but strong, vigorous, believing young men, sincere to the backbone, are wanted. A hundred such and the world becomes revolutionized.

Swami Vivekananda.



A-1

Any expansion is life, all construction is death. All love is expansion, all selfishness is construction. Love is therefore the only law of life. He who loves lives, he who is selfish is dying Therefore, love for love's sake. Because, it is the only law of life.

—*Swami Vivekananda*





"The greatest truths are the simplest things in the world, simple as your own existence."

Swamt Vivekananda



"It is faith in the name of Lord that works wonders; for faith is life and want of faith is death."

—*Srı Ramakrishna*



"Thinking all the time that we are diseased will not cure us; medicine is necessary. Being reminded of weakness does not help much. The remedy for weakness is not brooding over weakness, but thinking of strength."

—Swami Vivekananda

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"It is struggle against nature and not confirmity to nature that makes man what he is."

– *S. Vivekananda*



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